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ABSTRACT

This document considers the impact of federal policy in the dissemination and implementation of one government-sponsored school improvement program. It reports a study of Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE), a high school work-and-school program developed under the auspices of the National Institute of Education (NIE). The report begins (chapters 2-5) by describing the various strategies designed by the NIE to implement the program in schools across the nation, including (1) development and dissemination of EBCE by four regional labs, (2) training and technical assistance provided to local program participants, (3) federal funding of local programs, and (4) state capacity-building strategy. The influence of each strategy on local implementation and institutionalization activities is considered. Chapter 6 then discusses the institutionalization phase of EBCE. Concerns include the extent to which EBCE programs continued after federal assistance came to an end and the effect of program continuation on local educational systems. Chapter 7 considers the possibility of broader effects of federal policy and the implications of these findings for reconsidering notions of federal influence on local practice. (YLB)

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EBCE FINAL REPORT

VOLUME II

Federal Policy and Local Effects: The Implementation and Institutionalization of EBCE

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Appendix A: The Method of the Study
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I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years the federal government has spent much time and money to encourage educational innovations. Various ways of disseminating and implementing effective and lasting innovations have been tried--federal program subsidies, the provision of staff training and technical assistance, instructional packages, the development of regional dissemination agencies, demonstration programs, and lately, networks of practitioners. But the results have not often been as extensive as the federal efforts. A large number of studies have described the shortcomings and pitfalls of local implementation of federal programs and have demonstrated that the rate of local continuation of federally sponsored innovations is extremely low.[1]

Research on implementation and institutionalization suggests the limits of the influence of federal policy on local education activity, especially for "school improvement" programs in which local participation is voluntary. While the consensus two decades ago may have been that federal education policy could strongly influence local practice, the thinking about the federal role in non-categorical programs has in large part changed.[2] The literature instead emphasizes the importance of local commitment and problem-solving agendas to the way in which programs turn out;[3] the tendency of state and local agencies to reshape federal initiatives to suit their needs;[4] and the relative freedom of local schoolpeople to improvise on federally suggested themes.[5] The picture that emerges is one of federal policy dominated by local influences.

But how does this implementation research inform federal policy? An important set of questions remains to be answered in rethinking the federal role in education. Can the impact of federal strategies on local implementation

and institutionalization be demonstrated? Do external aid, expert assistance, and agency sponsorship make a difference for local programs? If so, how much of a difference and of what type? Which of these policy variables are more potent, and do their effects merit extensive federal support? The picture of federal policy's impact on local practice needs to be filled out. Whether federal influence on local activities has been underestimated remains an empirical question.

The Study of EBCE

This report considers the impact of federal policy in the dissemination and implementation of one government-sponsored school improvement program. The program we studied was Experience-Based Career Education (EBCE), a high school work-and-school program developed under the auspices of the National Institute of Education. In 1976, the NIE contracted with The Huron Institute to conduct an implementation study of EBCE. The study of EBCE implementation covered four years and reached into every region of the country. We conducted field research in over 40 school districts, studied 17 state education agencies, and interviewed hundreds of administrators, teachers, students, and community representatives. We studied the activities of four regional research and development laboratories, attended regional adopter meetings, and participated in national meetings of EBCE practitioners. The study combined qualitative and quantitative data-collection methods, and included survey research on 130 operating EBCE programs. (For a detailed description of the study method, refer to Appendix A: The Method of the Study.) The examination of EBCE has resulted in a series of reports on various aspects of its implementation.[6] (A list of these reports can be found in Appendix B.)

The NIE was especially interested in the durability and persistence of EBCE implementation, and in 1979 asked The Huron Institute to return to local school districts that had been visited earlier in our study to observe what occurred after federal aid was withdrawn from those districts. The NIE request focused on the long-run effects of federal implementation strategies:

> One of the major issues in educational policy concerns the effects of federal funding upon educational innovation. A substantial body of research has found that few federally funded innovations persist beyond the period of external funding. The EBCE program has been implemented with careful consideration to the problems of long-run 'institutionalization'. Building upon prior experience, the Federal government has offered a variety of incentives to SEAs and LEAs. [This study] offers an opportunity to examine a) how effectively the innovation is implemented when federal funds are withdrawn, and b) factors that account for variations in the durability of this innovation.[7]

In the final two years of the study, we conducted follow-up research on 24 EBCE programs. This research was done after the federal presence in the district had terminated: after either federal funding or the district's affiliation with NIE-sponsored regional laboratories had ceased.

This follow-up research had two purposes. First, we wanted to know what happened to the EBCE program after federal funding was terminated or the laboratory presence came to an end--how the innovation fared locally after federal influence had waned. We therefore studied the "institutionalization" of EBCE programs in these sites. We also looked beyond the limits of the EBCE programs themselves to explore possible broader effects of EBCE, such as program spin-offs and staff assimilation of new teaching methods.

At the same time, we wanted to learn more about the impact of federal policies and activities on local programs. Specifically, we were interested in how federal policies and activities to encourage implementation and

institutionalization had affected local practice. We wanted to know in what instances and under what conditions federal intervention might be most efficacious, and we wondered whether federal influence might be greater than previously suggested. The second purpose of this study, then, was to analyze the impact of federal policy.

EBCE provided a compelling study of federal policy in education. In the decentralized U.S. education system, federal agencies have at their disposal a limited number of policies or "steering mechanisms"[8] to bring to bear on programs, and federal officials are acutely aware that even in the best of circumstances, these mechanisms are often weak. It is not surprising then that federal agencies are interested in the extent to which the available policies result in effects at the local level; they hope to increase the efficacy of these mechanisms. Adopting a federal perspective, we wanted to explore to what extent and in what ways federal policies can influence local practice. In this study, we took a closer look at federal strategies in the implementation of EBCE and considered the local activities and effects--both direct and indirect--that resulted.

As a prime example of "directed development," EBCE offered an opportunity to consider the effectiveness of various federal policies in developing and disseminating innovations, and as a major school innovation, EBCE combined several federal strategies in one program. Regional development, federal funding, training and technical assistance, and state capacity-building were all employed by federal agencies to create, spread, and maintain EBCE. Therefore, it was possible to observe the impact of these "steering mechanisms" in local school districts.

EBCE also provided an opportunity to study program persistence and the broader effects of federal policy. While much concern has been expressed about the lack of local continuation of federally sponsored innovations, relatively little research has been conducted on this process. On the issue of program continuation, a close look at EBCE provided an opportunity to better understand what is involved in the institutionalization of federal programs. EBCE also afforded an opportunity to look at the broader effects of federal policy on local practice. The case of EBCE suggests that significant outcomes of federal program activity may be found beyond the bounds of the program, whether the program grew, was reduced, or disappeared entirely.

At first blush, adopting the federal perspective on policy and results might suggest a model of causation which posits a direct and independent relation between federal program policy and local program effects. But one of the chief lessons we have learned from 15 years of implementation research is that a linear cause-and-effect relation between an independent variable (e.g., a specific federal policy) and outcome variables (e.g., program effectiveness or institutionalization) is rarely demonstrable, and at best is tenuous. This is because there are many background variables that come into play to complicate matters--factors such as national policy climate, local context, including organizational and fiscal circumstances, and individual participants' preferences. In addition, for the discussion of program institutionalization, the ways in which a program is adapted for persistence, and its perceived effectiveness during early implementation, may constitute critical intervening variables. And in the case of EBCE, there were also methodological problems caused by the mix of implementation strategies actually operating in the field: the confounding of multiple federal and

laboratory influences on local programs makes it problematic to attribute causation to one or another strategy. Mindful of these qualifications, then, we turn to the consideration of federal influences on the implementation and institutionalization of EBCE.

Federal Policy for EBCE

In the case of EBCE, several federal strategies had been deliberately planned to stimulate implementation. Chief among these were four: development and marketing of EBCE by four regional educational R & D laboratories; the provision of training and technical assistance to school districts; federal grants to subsidize local EBCE program operations; and efforts to build state-level capacity in EBCE dissemination and implementation.

EBCE was born in 1971, as the U.S. Office of Education responded to Commissioner Sidney Marland's mandate for new programs to "bridge the gap" between school and work. To this end, OE commissioned several regional educational laboratories to develop operational programs based on one of the three career education models under discussion at the time. By 1972, four labs had prepared plans for the design and development of EBCE, and had established demonstration high schools in four school districts. The labs were Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) in Portland, Oregon; Far West Laboratory (FWL) in San Francisco; Research for Better Schools (RBS) in Philadelphia; and Appalachian Educational Laboratory (AEL) in Charleston, West Virginia. In that same year, the contracts with the four labs were transferred to the newly created National Institute of Education, and the laboratories continued their work under NIE's auspices.

The four developers created four versions or "models" of EBCE which had central features in common but varied in many respects. They developed program materials, conducted evaluations of their demonstrations, and began

dissemination of EBCE to local school districts. Funded by the NIE, the laboratories provided free materials, staff training, and technical assistance to a limited number of districts interested in serving as "pilot" sites and willing to provide evaluation data in return. The labs also provided less intensive training and technical assistance to another group of sites--called "market demand" sites--which purchased materials from the labs. In these and in the pilot sites, funding for program staffing and operations was left entirely to local initiative.

In the first four years of EBCE, about $14 million was spent on development, research, and implementation. A series of evaluation studies concluded that EBCE was successful, and in 1975 the program was designated by the NIE-OE Joint Dissemination and Review Panel as an exemplary education program. This made EBCE eligible for national dissemination with Vocational Education Act Part D funding, and signaled the beginning of a cycle of three-year federal grants for program operation. The number of EBCE programs increased dramatically; and by mid-1979, roughly half of the 150 EBCE programs were subsidized through Part D grants.[9]

The NIE's dissemination plans for EBCE also included in 1976 modest two-year "capacity-building" contracts with four state departments of education. The notion was that the SEA staff, with lab assistance, would acquire the capability to train local districts to implement EBCE. In the following year, 13 additional states were selected for the capacity-building project, and received free lab assistance but no federal support.

In a further effort to encourage the program's spread, the NIE supported early attempts to establish a national network of EBCE practitioners. As of 1980, the National Experience-Based Career Education Association boasted

several hundred members and a small paid staff, and was entirely self-supporting. In a brief period of time, EBCE had become a major national school-and-work program, enjoying widespread popularity.

In this report, we discuss federal EBCE policies and local effects. We begin by describing the various strategies designed by the NIE to implement the program in schools across the nation: we explore the development and dissemination of EBCE by four regional labs; the training and technical assistance provided to local porgram participants; the federal funding of local programs; and the state capacity-building strategy. We consider the influence of each strategy on local implementation and institutionalization activities. What was the effect of developing four models of EBCE and of having four laboratories market their products? What role did training and technical assistance play in encouraging replication of lab models and in providing for EBCE continuation? Did external funding make a difference for programs, and did it influence the chances for program survival? Did the state capacity-building effort result in increased state-level capability in EBCE?

Following this, we discuss the "institutionalization" phase of EBCE. We wondered to what extent EBCE programs continued after federal assistance came to an end, and with what effect on local educational systems. Finally, we consider the possibility of broader effects of federal policy, and the implications of these findings for reconsidering notions of federal influence on local practice.

NOTES

1. For a range of views on implementation problems, see Ruby Martin and Phyllis McClure, Title I of ESEA: Is It Helping Poor Children?, A report by the Washington Research Project of the Southern Center of Studies in Public Policy and the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc. (Washington, D.C., 1969); Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, Implementation (Berkeley: University of California, 1973); Milbrey W. McLaughlin, "Implementation of ESEA Title I: A Problem of Compliance," Teachers College Record, 77 (1976); and Jerome T. Murphy, State Education Agencies and Discretionary Funds (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1974).

2. A somewhat different argument might be made for federal impact in the case of categorical, "equity-related" programs and policies, such as in the areas of civil rights and education for the handicapped. But while it is clear that the central government plays a relatively more influential role in the implementation of some categorical programs--such as Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act--for others, such as Title I of ESEA, the issue is less clear. Although the funds are granted with strings attached, the guidelines and regulations are usually weakly enforced, and while there is some outside monitoring, it is usually sporadic and often little more than ritual.

3. Paul Berman and Milbrey McLaughlin, "Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change," Volume IV (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, April, 1975).

4. Murphy, op. cit.

5. Daniel C. Lortie, Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); Karl E. Weick, "Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems," Administrative Science Quarterly, 21, March, 1976; and Eleanor Farrar, John E. DeSanctis, and David K. Cohen, "Views from Below: Implementation Research in Education" (Cambridge, MA: The Huron Institute, 1979).

6. The reader is guided especially to Eleanor Farrar, John E. DeSanctis and David K. Cohen, Ibid., which outlines the study's conceptual framework, and also to Farrar, DeSanctis, and Peter Cowden, "The Walls Within: Work, Experience, and School Reform" (July 1980), the major report on the effectiveness of EBCE implementation.

7. DHEW, The National Institute of Education, RFP No. NIE-R-79-0039, Scope of Work, p. 2, August, 1979.

8. The notion of federal steering mechanisms was gleaned from a series of conversations on federal policy with Jerome T. Murphy. This metaphor, implying repeated adjustments in policy and only limited control, seems more descriptive of federal policy than the more common notion of "policy levers," which implies a sense of automatic control that rarely, if ever, exists.

9. DHEW, op. cit.

II. THE IMPACT OF THE FOUR LABORATORIES

In the story of the implementation of EBCE, the role of the four laboratories is an important chapter. The development of multiple EBCE models was a deliberate federal strategy, assumed to provide a range of benefits. The NIE could have put all of its EBCE development resources into one laboratory, concentrating more dollars and attention on a single EBCE prototype; instead, the decision was made in 1972 to fund four laboratories.

An important question, then, concerns the effectiveness of federal policy in funding the four laboratories: did this strategy result in more widespread EBCE adoption and more effective implementation? A related question concerns the impact of the labs and their staff--as agents of the federal government--on local programs: precisely what was their effect?

The NIE multi-lab strategy fostered diversity among programs--diversity in regional coverage, in marketing methods and styles, and to a lesser degree in program substance. It amounted to a "planned variation" approach to directed development in many ways similar to the Head Start and Follow Through implementation strategies, and a product of the same times and forces. Having four laboratories involved in the business of EBCE provided choices to school districts. Local schoolpeople could choose among models and approaches to implementation, and select those that seemed to best fit the needs and preferences of each locale. The availability of such a choice encouraged the spread of EBCE and stimulated local adaptation and modification of the EBCE models.

Model Differences

The laboratories that developed EBCE are in different regions of the country, and the four models were designed relatively independently of one

another. They nevertheless shared several common features. They all proposed the community as an extension of the classroom, altered relations between teachers and students, and flexible student programs that included several hours or days a week out in the community. And each model stressed integration of academic and experiential learning as the core of the reform. But the four models differed significantly on important dimensions of the EBCE innovation, and thus represented four distinct conceptions of how the central EBCE themes could be put into practice.

The model developed by Appalachian Educational Laboratory in Charleston, West Virginia, reflected its developers' experience in traditional vocational education programs: the laboratory is situated in a region of traditional American values, hard work, and chronic unemployment. Instead of attending classes, AEL's EBCE students were to spend 70% to 80% of their time at employer sites of their choice, completing their individual academic and career programs.[1] The EBCE "curriculum" was designed around the courses and credits required by the local high school, but the program was a self-contained alternative to traditional course work. Program staff were to work with each student individually to "build an integrated career exploration plan and an academic program based on the student's stated learning objectives."[2]

Far West Laboratory in San Francisco developed a model that reflected the values and life style of the urban West Coast--where self-discovery was considered important, and the "sensitivity movement" was born. The FWL version of EBCE thus focused on behavior, and bore a strong resemblance to free schools. It stressed student choice, self-direction, and the development of an inquisitive sense that would help students become better consumers of career

opportunities. The program was designed for local implementation in various configurations: for a cross-section of students or a special target group, as a program within school or as a separate school, and as a full-time or a part-time option. The students' study plans involved individual and small-group projects jointly approved by the program staff and the community employer or "resource person." The projects "blended career development with basic skills, life skills, and academic learning, enabling students to earn course credits in standard areas through community-based research, experience, and related reading and discussion."[3] In this model, students spent from 20% to 80% of their time in the community.

Research for Better Schools of Philadelphia developed its model within the setting of large Eastern urban schools with a heavy minority population. As a result, it emphasized the acquisition of basic skills. And because the developers knew that the Philadelphia schools had developed many exciting innovations but had had difficulty in moving them into the system's mainstream, RBS sought to develop a model that was useful, acceptable, and not exotic--so that it could be easily implemented and widely adopted. This model was designed to "operate on and benefit from the regular school curriculum."[4] Half the students' work was to be based on the parent school's course requirements and schedules, and on basic skills instruction. Basic skills work was to be individual, and students were to spend about 20% of their time in the community.

Finally, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory's version of EBCE was concerned with helping students develop initiative and a new sense of self and responsibility. Unlike the other West Coast model, it was less overtly reformist in style. It mirrored its region's concern with community control

and paid attention to basic skills development. It emphasized the contributions and opinions solicited from businesses that not only might provide training opportunities for students, but were potential employers of graduates. The program was developed as a "full-time, comprehensive, interdisciplinary program with three curriculum areas--basic skills, life skills, and career development. Learning strategies include career exploration, projects, skill building, competency certification, student journals, and seminars."[5] Each student's individual learning plan was to be developed jointly by student and staff, and students spent about 50% of their time in the community.

The four models of ESCE, then, turned out differently for the four laboratories. Each version reflected the background, experience, and philosophical perspective of its developers, and each reflected its developers' social and political context, as well as the geographical and cultural influences of its region. But in its own way, each version was a serious effort to integrate academic and experiential learning within a format which responded to the prevailing national sentiment about combining schooling with work.

Four Marketing Strategies

The models differed not only in substance, but also in their strategies for marketing and dissemination. The four developers' views of implementation were in many ways similar, but each lab developed a strategy intended to increase the likelihood that the innovation would be well implemented and adapted for persistence in local school districts. These various approaches to implementation influenced the development of the models themselves. Like the models, these strategies reflect the labs' histories, geographic context, and preferred styles. Thus, federal influence was limited even at this early

stage in the development of EBCE models and the planning for dissemination and implementation. While the labs all agreed on the importance of training, materials, and technical assistance in encouraging and supporting local implementation, they weighed the importance of these strategies differently--and the models were developed and refined to reflect these differences.

AEL emphasized the importance of training and materials, but because the model was more like familiar school programs, little technical assistance was planned and schools were expected to have little difficulty with implementation after initial staff training. The broad appeal of AEL's model gave the lab a marketing orientation, and considerable attention was devoted to helping districts enlist the employer sites necessary for placing students in the field right away. RBS on the other hand, stressed the importance of continuing technical assistance to adopters, because it believed that support and encouragement were essential to overcoming school system resistance and building the commitment that successful implementation requires. This explains RBS's gradualist view of implementation as well, and accounts for its prescription that students spend no more than one day a week out of school. By not intervening dramatically in school systems at the start, this version of EBCE was expected to eventually produce the school system change to which EBCE aspires.

Northwest's main approach to implementation was by way of carefully prepared and elaborately detailed materials and procedures. Though the lab considered training and technical assistance important, it believed that the essence of EBCE was contained in five core components which sites could develop on their own, as well as in a set of values and attitudes about learning which are best insured by careful staff selection. Northwest, then,

had a decidedly non-consultative approach to implementation, based on the view that well-designed materials accompanied by task-oriented training were all that was generally needed to put the model in place.

Far West's view of implementation underscored the importance of identifying potential adopters willing to make the substantial commitment in time and resources that this version of EBCE requires. Far West believed that staff participation in full model development was essential to building commitment and to acquiring an awareness of why it is important for students to develop their own learning agenda. The Far West model therefore required extensive training and technical assistance. Students and staff were asked to assume considerable personal responsibility and to undertake the difficult task of redefining their roles vis-a-vis one another. Far West's approach, then, stressed careful site selection, and training and attention during start-up, as the best way to ensure successful implementation.

Maximizing Adoption Through Four Models

Having four laboratories involved in the development of EBCE meant that a range of options was available to school districts, in terms of both the substance of the program and the styles and methods employed by the labs. Many school district representatives reported that they "shopped" among the models, and chose the alternative that seemed somehow right for them. The criteria for model selection were varied, and were not always explicit to the people making the adoption decision.

There was a tendency for districts to adopt the EBCE model developed in their region of the country. The distribution of programs nationwide to some degree reflects this trend; for example, all the EBCE programs in California adopted the Far West Laboratory version, or a modification of it,

while most of the districts in the Northwest and Rocky Mountain states favored the Northwest model.[6] For many of EBCE's adopting districts, proximity was an important factor in deciding which model to adopt, as distance from labs and travel costs for training mattered. In some districts (e.g., a small northwestern Rockies town with a limited budget), it was the chief factor in picking a model. In a town 50 miles from one of the labs, we asked why the district had chosen the model they had. An administrator replied that it seemed the only logical thing to do: "[The lab] is so close, and the model so accessible to us, that we could go up there and see it . . . . So we took their program and made our own adaptations."[7]

On the other hand, for sites that were not especially close to any of the labs, or that were amply funded, proximity seemed less important. As a result, programs based on all four models were to be found in all regions of the country. A midwestern school district reported being "impressed" with two of the models, one originating quite a bit closer than the other. But the "intense structure and complexity of [one model]" discouraged them from that, and they decided to work with the lab that was 2000 miles away, rather than the one just 200 miles down the road.[8] Even in this case, however, the influence of geography could be felt. The district hired a representative of the closer lab to serve as a "third-party evaluator" of this Part D program, and worked more closely with him than with the more distant agents of the other lab. His role gradually evolved over two years into chief technical advisor to the program, as the site adopted more and more of his lab's methods and materials. Admitting that it was easier to work with the closer lab, the program director officially dropped the first model after two years and switched allegiance to the laboratory in the neighboring state.

For EBCE adopters, lab proximity to the school district was an important influence on decisions in the implementation of EBCE. It was easier to work with laboratories that were close by, and having four labs involved meant that EBCE was more accessible to a greater number of school districts than it would have been, had there been but one model of EBCE.

Model Substance and Local Choice

One might expect that the substantial differences in the structure, components, and operations of the four models would influence adopters' choice; and to some extent this was the case, as the above example illustrates. But program substance explained surprisingly few of the model choices, as considerations of geography, lab salesmanship, and personal preference usually took precedence over program differences. There was, however, one significant exception--the proportion of student time spent out of school in the community.

Local administrators generally took care to adopt a model that would be acceptable in their districts. Some local plans called for a substantially separate career education program with quite a bit of student time allocated to out-of-school experiences. In one such town that was looking for a "real alternative" to regular high school, the project director explained that his district wanted a highly "structured program designed to bridge the gap" between the classroom and community experiences. In his view, only the AEL model--which called for up to 80 percent of the student's time out of school--could provide the answer to his town's need. He was "turned on to AEL's structure," and chose that approach over the other options.[9]

But administrators in other locales reported that, although they themselves might favor a model with a higher percentage of time on work sites, prevailing community attitudes toward high-school-aged youth being outside the classroom dictated requiring less time in the community. A typical view was that some models required "simply too much" time outside school to be acceptable to teachers and parents. For districts where this was a prime concern, the RBS model was often chosen, as it provided an "alternative within the schools,"[10] a program that might blend into existing arrangements and not attract too much attention to EBCE. It turned out that regardless of the model chosen, local implementation rarely resulted in as much out-of-school time as outlined by the labs; but in the process of selecting models at the outset, there was quite a lot of discussion about this facet of EBCE. So in at least some substantive areas, differences among the programs offered by the four laboratories influenced school district choice of models.

The Impact of Lab Salesmanship on Districts

Marketing of the models was another way in which the four laboratories had a substantial impact on local school systems, and lab salesmanship was a significant, albeit subtle, influence on model choice. Many sites took one version of EBCE over the others because they preferred the lab's sales pitch. With four laboratories competing for customers, the EBCE marketing campaigns were perhaps more aggressive than they might have been with but one program on the market. Dissemination materials were prepared and audio-visual presentations were developed. Lab staff presented their EBCE models directly to interested school districts, as well as to state and regional groups of administrators at meetings and conferences. In these public settings, the substantive differences among the models were not emphasized,

and so other factors--such as marketing methods and style--took precedence as districts selected models. Some local people, for example, preferred the more subtle sell to the aggressive pitch. One midwestern administrator was put off by the aggressive salesmanship displayed at a 1976 "awareness conference" for prospective Part D adopters, and chose to align himself with the lab that was least pushy. He reported that the representative of this lab was "more cooperative" and that "the selling itself was different from lab to lab. There was marketing going on. One thing that was hard to get hold of was cost. Boy, were they ever evasive with cost."[11]

Beyond marketing methods, the style and presentation of lab representatives was a key factor in determining model choice. When we asked about their reasons for choosing a certain model, most local people mentioned their feelings toward the lab representatives: that they were "turned off" by this one's arrogance, "impressed" with the competence of that one, and so on. The example of a high school counselor's impression of a lab representative illustrates the importance of these initial contacts:

> Dr. Something-or-other was talking way over everybody's head, and used a lot of jargon. We were at a loss. We looked at each other and said, 'Who is this guy anyway?' We decided that [EBCE] was probably just another rip-off. So I just forgot about the program.[12]

As it turned out, this counselor's district did adopt the model "Dr. Something-or-other" was selling, as other local people evaluated the lab differently. But similar feelings elsewhere--although not expressed as dramatically--resulted in adoption of other models.

An administrator in another district told us that he "was impressed by the people" on his visit to a lab, and that this clinched his choice of that model--even though he never visited the demonstration school on his cros-

country trip. He wondered at the time why they didn't take him to the demonstration school, and learned later that lab staff were having "serious problems" there. Looking back on his choice, this vocational and career education director reflected that it was probably a good thing that he did not see the program, as it might have affected his choice, one he was quite content with.[13] The style and presentation of lab people clearly influenced model choice.

Summary

One result of these variations among the laboratories, their models, and their marketing styles probably was broader dissemination and implementation of EBCE than would have resulted had only one prototype been available to school districts. The fact that the labs were geographically diverse and provided models and approaches that were different opened up a range of alternatives and gave interested school districts a range of options from which to choose. Although the labs seemed to play down the differences in models after the early years--and in fact these distinctions blurred somewhat as the models evolved--the substantive differences in models and the variation in lab style and personnel provided a real sense of choice in the adopting districts. And local people saw their choosing process as an important facet of implementation, as an essential element in building local ownership of EBCE.

The differences among the labs were important, then, not only in providing the nation's school districts with four models from which to choose, but in presenting districts with four approaches to implementation, of which some were stylistically and substantively more compatible with the needs and preferences of districts than others. In effect, then, this

broadened the field of potential adopters of EBCE, as districts could respond to different models and to different implementation strategies as well.

More important for local implementation, the four-model strategy was the first step in the diversification and adaptation of EBCE programs in school districts. The existence of four models in four labs jostling for their share of the EBCE market by trying to be somehow "different" set the scene for the implementation of EBCE locally. Diversity at the laboratory level concretely illustrated to the districts that it was okay to be different, to modify EBCE, to adapt the program to local needs and purposes, and to redevelop it into whatever shape seemed appropriate.

Thus diversity at the lab level may have further stimulated the great diversity of EBCE programs and activities at the district level by illustrating that effective EBCE programs could take different forms. Since replication was not essential for success, local schoolpeople had only to take a short leap to conclude that they could introduce variations of their own. Local schoolpeople went beyond the four versions of EBCE that were offered to them in developing local programs and variations that were widely divergent. Local implementors of EBCE improvised on the models that they adopted, and created their own programs.

The labs were thus instrumental in shaping long-term EBCE prospects. They exerted considerable indirect influence, especially in encouraging program adaptation. In varying degrees, they urged implementors to modify their materials and activities in whatever ways would increase the likelihood of program survival in each district. To the degree that the labs were effective in this regard, their impact was felt several years later as districts made decisions about the continuation of EBCE.

NOTES

1. The various models of EBCE evolved over time, changing markedly from original conception through local implementation. The descriptions offered here were generally accepted as accurate at the time The Huron Institute study of EBCE was undertaken. These descriptions were taken from A Comparison of Four Experience-Based Career Education Programs, published by NIE in 1976 with the prior review and approval of the four laboratories.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, Experience-Based Career Education Programs: National Directory, 1979 (San Francisco, CA: author, September 1979).

7. Interview with Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education, March, 1977.

8. Interview with EBCE Program Director, February, 1978.

9. Interview with Guidance Counselor/Career Education Director, May, 1977.

10. Interview with EBCE Project Director, March, 1977.

11. Interview with Career Education Director, April, 1977.

12. Interview with School Guidance Counselor, May, 1977.

13. Interview with Vocational Education Director, April, 1977.

III. THE IMPACT OF TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The second federal policy variable studied for its possible impact on implementation and institutionalization was training and technical assistance. The chief issue here concerned the role of T & TA in influencing local implementation and in encouraging program continuation: how were implementation and institutionalization over the long run affected by differences in the nature, source, and magnitude of the training and technical assistance local programs have received?

Previous research on implementation suggests that T & TA might influence effective implementation and persistence less than would other factors, such as local commitment and resources. Since EBCE included programs that received varying amounts of lab training, we searched for links between the amount of T & TA sites received and the effectiveness of the implementation. We wondered whether programs that were being implemented effectively might have received more T & TA than those that were less effective. We also wondered whether the amount of initial training and technical aid might be related to the extent of eventual program incorporation into school system routines.

Judgments about the relationship between policy and program effectiveness are of course inextricably intertwined with the criteria for assessing effectiveness. That is, one must have some idea of what constitutes an effective program in order to judge the federal impact on effectiveness. Various criteria for assessing program effectiveness have been applied in the evaluation of federal programs, among them fidelity of local programs to federal plans and goals; mutual adaptation of federal programs and local environment; and the perceptions of local program participants and observers.

Both central and local criteria are of merit in judging the effectiveness of a voluntary program such as EBCE, whose flexibility and malleability explain much of its broad popularity among local participants. In exploring the influences on the implementation of EBCE, then, we considered the factors related to faithful replication of models, as well as those that seemed to explain adaptation for program persistence. And we observed that influences on local perceptions of effectiveness often played a major role in explaining how things turned out.

In the instance of EBCE, the laboratories distinguished between the companion concepts of training and technical assistance, but the difference was usually blurred at the local level. "Training" for the most part referred to formal (frequently group) pre-service workshop or classroom sessions, conducted by lab staff (often working in teams) either at the labs or in districts. The labs offered sites various training "packages" whose length ranged from one week to three weeks in 1976 and 1977, when most programs were starting up. "Technical assistance," on the other hand, usually meant to the labs follow-up consultation with schoolpeople, in the form of on-site problem-solving sessions, advice on materials use and adaptation, and telephone conferences. But in most of the sites we studied, these distinctions were soon lost in the crush of program start-up, and "training and technical assistance" came to mean a wide range of lab help provided to struggling practitioners. Scheduling difficulties at the beginning of the first year of operations often meant that the pre-service training packages could not be completed before the school year began, so that planned training activities were deferred to follow-up technical assistance visits to sites, often several months later. "T & TA" intervention became a catch-all for implementation

concerns, as local assistance needs got mixed up with unfinished lab training agendas. Because training and technical assistance blended together over time, we refer in this report to such lab intervention simply as "T & TA," except when the distinction is clear and important to the discussion.

T & TA and Program Life Cycles

EBCE evidence suggests that the effectiveness of T & TA and its perceived usefulness locally were related to phases in the program life cycle of the innovation. Specifically, training and technical assistance seemed to be very important in helping local schoolpeople to get new programs started and working effectively, but to become less so over time.

Local EBCE program staff, by and large, reported to us that pre-service training and the follow-up technical assistance they received from laboratory staff was quite useful in getting their EBCE programs off the ground. A typical start-up experience was related by a learning coordinator who spent three days at a lab during her first month of EBCE work, and thereafter was visited by a lab person once each semester. The lab representative helped her "contact the community people and write up sites," spent an entire evening helping her "figure out" her role in the project, and actually helped her place her first student in the community. In her opinion, she "could not have gotten by without" this help.[1]

Local staff similarly agreed in recommending that other school districts who were considering starting EBCE programs should plan to have lab assistance from the outset. Programs that added staff once under way and could procure training and technical assistance for the new people reported seeing the advantages of lab help. One pilot site could not afford additional lab services when new staff were hired during the second year, and tried to train

them on their own. But they reported being too busy to train them well, and admitted that the new people "really had to stumble along" for quite a while. The experienced staff concluded from this that initial lab training was critical, and recommended that no district try to start a program without it.[2] Whether interviewed soon after program inception or several years later, local teachers and administrators frequently regarded the training they received at the beginning of the implementation phase as crucial.

On the other hand, many of the same people told us that they did not ask the labs to train new staff that were hired in the second or third year of EBCE operations. Rather than calling in the outside experts, we found that local EBCE staff members who had been trained by the labs usually preferred to pass along their own expertise. They felt that their experience with their own program in their local context was probably more useful to new staff members than was the considerable knowledge of the lab expert. After working out the bugs of the program and making the accommodations and adaptations that were necessary for maintaining operations in that locale, most EBCE staffers felt that they really had a better handle on their own particular brand of EBCE implementation than did lab trainers. Most Part D sites used less lab time during their second and third year than they had originally budgeted for. And when we asked pilot site staff whether they would buy more training were money available, some said they would rather apply it to other uses, such as buying more writing time for local teachers to help with development and additional curriculum units for EBCE.[3] So although local staff viewed external training and technical assistance as important in starting up a brand new program, they did not always see it as necessary for training new staff once the program was under way.

Training Styles and Local Preferences

Although the general judgment of lab training and TA was positive, local districts reported problems that in some instances seemed to diminish its effectiveness. Some sites reported clashes between staff and lab representatives from the outset; whether they cut back or continued their training program, they later reported that the T & TA they had received was not as useful as they had hoped. They offered several explanations for difficulties with lab representatives. To begin with, not all the training staff were respected equally by site people. Some of them were viewed as being "too inexperienced and unaccomplished with EBCE" to be very helpful[4]--though this was said of only some lab staff, and those reports were by no means universal. In addition, personal preferences played a role, as lab training styles did not always fit with local styles of teaching and training. Some local staff complained that they were "talked at" in training held at the laboratory, and were generally displeased to be sitting in a conference room for a week listening to lectures about EBCE. One local Part D project director complained about the lab pre-training week:

> [It was] horrible . . . . They didn't practice what they preach at all--they lectured at us . . . the classroom was a mess and the room was hot and stuffy all the time . . . and there was no room for participant involvement.[5]

A learning coordinator who spent a week in training at another lab observed that the substance of the sessions was "fairly abstract" and "very confusing." He would have preferred "to work with students in the training session," to help him better understand how the program "actually operates."[6] Still others felt that too much information was thrust at them in too short a time, and that it was often "overwhelming," in the view of one EBCE teacher.[7] But even

with these problems, this teacher reported that once she started working with students, she "realized the training was necessary." And the learning coordinator observed: "I don't think we could have done as well without the training."[8]

Whether or not schoolpeople viewed early training as useful seemed to be related to how things were going with the local EBCE program, as well as to their stylistic preferences about T & TA. The more trouble they had with start-up, the less likely they were to think the training was really helpful. That sort of response may have been a way of making the labs scapegoats for local problems; or perhaps, as some local staff argued, training was not flexible enough to address their particular start-up needs. Over time, reports of this sort diminished. It is not clear whether that was because the training improved as labs gained experience, because local staff in newer sites were more compatible with EBCE intentions, because the models presented in training were adapted over time as EBCE evolved into less complex and demanding versions, or for all these reasons.

Whatever the reasons for local opinions of lab services, school districts' decisions about further training and technical assistance were in some instances affected by their experiences with the training or lab staff they had encountered. The substantial federal Part D grants gave some districts great flexibility in how much T & TA to purchase (in contrast with pilot sites, most of which received fairly standard training packages of roughly the same length and coverage). Some of these Part D sites chose to purchase more T & TA than others, and we were curious why. In at least some sites we visited, the reasons given centered around perceptions of the substance of the training or the competence of the providers of training, or their own

confidence in their ability to implement EBCE without more outside help. In these sites, the decision not to continue the training program was explained at least partly in terms of earlier experiences with lab representatives. For example, the Part D program director who thought that the first week of training at the lab was "horrible" chose to spend less than the training allotment approved in the federal grant.

Some districts wished to use Part D grant money originally proposed for T & TA for other needs that seemed more pressing by the second or third year of the project. One program director, for example, thought lab assistance was far too costly and petitioned the Office of Education for a budget amendment to use second-year Part D money earmarked for T & TA to send her staff to national professional association conferences and on visits to other EBCE programs. "I think more good comes out of that money that way than having [the labs] come here," she commented.[9]

T & TA as Problem Solving and Support

Whether or not the early training and technical assistance provided by the laboratories was seen as useful by site program staff, the perceived importance of training diminished over time. As local programs evolved and were adapted to local needs and contingencies, outside help came to be seen as less and less important. In the second and third years of program implementation, site people generally reported having less contact with laboratories, feeling less dependent on lab staff for help in solving problems, and being less disposed to purchase more technical assistance. By the third year, most local EBCE staff even seemed somewhat surprised when we asked about T & TA in the course of an interview--almost as if it were a dead issue. And this in many ways is as it should be, according to the labs. EBCE dissemination

plans called for short-term start-up assistance to sites, not for a permanent arrangement. The laboratories never intended to be locally involved indefinitely. Rather, their materials and training were designed to be "front-loaded" to varying degrees. All assistance programs were designed to provide a good dose of pre-service training, and a diminishing sequence of technical assistance follow-ups. The lab intentions seemed to be to develop local site independence in EBCE implementation; and this generally seems to have happened.

Local EBCE program people regarded lab training and technical assistance as professional support and hand-holding at least as much as they saw it as provision of the "missing technical resource," a commonly accepted perception of T & TA. We found that program people valued the information the lab staff offered on EBCE materials, methods, and activities. But quite a few of them told us that they could have gleaned that information from the materials nearly as well. The labs, as we noted above, provided voluminous implementation materials, and site people reported that these materials were quite complete. If anything, they were hard-pressed to find time to use all of these materials, rather than being short of EBCE information. Technical information on EBCE was not a major concern in the sites.

Even more than information on the program, local people valued the problem-solving help of the lab staff. When we asked about "technical assistance," local responses usually described how lab staff had helped with problems of implementation. The problems involved almost every aspect of program implementation, and lab staff pitched in and helped at least as often as they advised local staff on how to proceed. They wrote curricula, recruited students, presented EBCE to the faculty and the community, and in

one case acquired a telephone for the project:

> [The trainer from the lab] helped us a great deal in the beginning with the administration. She was so smooth and so marvelous. We had a hell of a time getting a telephone for the EBCE room at first and it was difficult to function without one. So [she] arranged to run into the superintendent on the street, and in the process of talking about how things were going in EBCE, she just mentioned that we sure could use a telephone. We got a telephone.[10]

TA delivery was usually arranged so that lab staff were "on call" to local people, and would return to the site as needed for follow-up work, or be available by telephone for lengthy consultations on program problems.

There were also numerous instances in which the help provided was more in the realm of personal support or counseling. Especially in the first few months of program implementation, local people found it very important that the lab staff by whom they had been trained were available (usually by telephone) just to listen to concerns or to "be there." The observations of one EBCE teacher during the second year of the program were probably representative of the feelings of many about the type of assistance most needed after local programs were under way:

> We're supposed to be able to receive technical assistance from the lab, but I haven't really called them for help except on a few occasions. When I do call, they're very helpful, very responsive, but there really isn't all that much they can help with, except early on with trying to figure out what this thing is all about.[11]

Lab staff, then, provided an important resource to local staff. But it was less often the missing technical resource outlined in standard models of T & TA, and more often a very human resource in the form of back-up and support during the implementation struggle.

T & TA and Institutionalization

In studying training and technical assistance, we began with three

categories of local EBCE programs for comparison: a number of sites termed "market demand" that had implemented EBCE with little or no training and assistance; the pilot sites affiliated with laboratories, which had generally had modest amounts of training and technical assistance; and Part D sites that had purchased varying amounts of T & TA from the program developers. As in the case of external subsidies and other forms of financial assistance, while there has been a good deal of argument about the importance of T & TA, there have rarely been opportunities to observe the effects of considerable variations of it, among diverse sites and over several years. The study of EBCE seemed likely to make such observations possible. In fact, however, there was but a small range in the amounts of T & TA provided to sites. Almost 90% of EBCE programs received two weeks or less of pre-service training, and of those that received follow-up training (one half) or technical assistance (two thirds), most received fewer than five days.[12]

Almost all of the EBCE sites received roughly similar amounts of start-up training and technical assistance. The world of EBCE was relatively small; estimates of the total number of sites increased from 130[13] to 200[14] during the period of this research. The population of programs was relatively controlled, and most of the participants played by the same rules. There was little difference in the amount of T & TA received according to type of site. Most of the pilot sites in our sample received a full package of T & TA from the laboratories: more than four fifths had less than three weeks of pre-service training, while nine tenths received a week or two of "follow-up training" and three fourths received two weeks or less of TA.[15] And while Part D sites seemed to have more flexibility in arranging for T & TA, as a group they in fact received roughly the same amounts as the pilot sites.[16]

The market demand sites as a group received the least amount of training and technical assistance, although even here over four fifths of the sites received training in the one- to two-week range.[17] Indeed, we found no districts that did not receive some amount of training or technical assistance. So using these program categories is not very informative in discussing the differential effects of T & TA.

We thought it might be useful to make another sort of distinction among programs, by identifying those sites that received little or no T & TA and comparing them to sites that fall within the range described above. But that approach is still not conclusive: the very few programs that received only nominal amounts of T & TA were comparable, in level and quality of implementation and extent of institutionalization, to programs that had had much more. We visited two market demand sites that were at one end of the T & TA continuum, but they had vigorous programs and had made adaptations that seemed to insure program persistence. Although this sub-sample was extremely small and findings of this type are of course inconclusive, observation does suggest that T & TA may not significantly affect the chances of long-term program survival, even if it does ease the burden and reduce staff stress during program start-up. For EBCE, the "standard" amount of T & TA seemed to be helpful to those that received it; but other programs seem to have survived and prospered without external help.

Summary

The impact of lab training and technical assistance on school districts can be viewed in three ways. First, there is the impact on the school district's ability to replicate a lab model; second, the criterion of successful adaptation for persistence comes into play; and third, the local opinion of the worth of T & TA can be considered.

Training and technical assistance was quite important in reproducing lab models, as faithful replication of lab versions of EBCE seemed to hinge on close work with the laboratory. Part D programs provide the best unit of analysis on this dimension, because they exhibited a wide range of T & TA use--at least when compared to pilot and market demand sites, most of which had about the same amount. Among Part D sites, those that had had the most training and technical assistance and the most contact with the laboratories were the most interested in remaining faithful to the lab models--though it is not clear whether these sites were predisposed to program fidelity or were strongly influenced by the labs. But generally, people in these districts respected the lab staff, took the lab blueprints as gospel, and tried to follow lab suggestions and materials to the letter. As a result, some of the most faithful replications we observed were in these Part D sites. So if model replication is desired, T & TA can be very important.

Using the second criterion of impact, training and technical assistance does not seem to matter much if the priority is local adaptation for persistence of the program. On the contrary, too much laboratory involvement in some cases seemed to work against continuation. There were stories of lab staff who insisted on high-fidelity implementation, and who "exchanged" their help for promises of faithfulness from district people.[18] And for at least two sites, lab insistence on fidelity resulted in programs that closely resembled the models but did not adapt well to the local environment. These programs struggled and were gradually phased out, failing to survive the transition from federal to local support. Yet there were other Part D programs that went their own way from the outset, choosing not to rely much on the laboratories and not to purchase much in the way of training and

technical assistance. Adapted to local conditions and agendas, these programs were greatly modified and resembled the lab models only slightly. Generally speaking, programs in this group were on a firmer footing locally after Part D funding terminated. They may not have looked much like the EBCE models out of which they grew, and they may not have been pleasing to certain lab staff, but the modifications made were more important in gaining them local support and resources than was training and technical assistance from the labs.

The third way to judge the impact of T & TA on districts was by looking at local perceptions of the T & TA provided. Local perceptions were that T & TA was useful as one element of a support system for implementation, especially in the early stages of the implementation process. T & TA generally seemed to be important for the project start-up phase, providing local EBCE staff with the help and support often needed to initiate a new program and get it running fairly smoothly. Lab staff not only made materials available to sites, but also made them usable by interpreting them and showing local staff how to apply them. T & TA provided local program people with a support system: the necessary program information for start-up, a common culture, language, and technology, a commitment to the values and goals of EBCE, and the knowledge that help was available in times of doubt or crisis.

Lab staff also served as an information network on what other EBCE sites were doing, what adaptations they were making and how, and how they were addressing common implementation problems. They were an easy phone call away and a handy reference that could either provide help directly or

suggest other districts who could. The labs facilitated contact among districts involved with their models through such devices as annual meetings of implementors, and thus encouraged cross-fertilization among sites.[19]

Perhaps, then, it is more appropriate in some instances to think of the purpose of T & TA as increasing the quality of local adaptation and improvisation than as ensuring fidelity of implementation. Lab staff helped local people redevelop EBCE, providing them with some measure of competence and confidence as they improvised.

NOTES

1. Interview with EBCE Evaluation Director, March, 1978.
2. Interviews with EBCE Reource Specialist and EBCE Learning Coordinator, July, 1976.
3. Ibid.
4. Interview with Career Education/EBCE Director, June, 1978
5. Ibid.
6. Interview with EBCE Learning Coordinator, March, 1978.
7. Interview with EBCE Learning Coordinator, March, 1977.
8. Ibid.
9. Interview with Career Education Coordinator, February, 1978.
10. Interview with EBCE Director, March, 1977.
11. Interview with EBCE Learning Coordinator, May, 1977.
12. Susan A. Stix and David K. Cohen, The Implementation of EBCE: A Survey of Programs and Populations (Cambridge, MA: The Huron Institute, October, 1978, p. 44).
13. Ibid., p. 1.
14. In a 1980 communication with a federal program officer, EBCE was reported to have spread to 200 school districts in 48 states (Memo of May 25, 1980).
15. Stix & Cohen, op. cit., Tables 8.5, 8.10, and 8.16.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Interview with EBCE Learning Coordinator, May, 1977.
19. In a way, the EBCE National Network (and later The National Experience-Based Career Education Association) was established by the NIE and the labs to take over this role, which became more demanding as the number of EBCE sites increased and the labs had less current information on site activities.

IV. THE IMPACT OF EXTERNAL AID

In this study, we wanted to know the extent to which external subsidies provide support, encouragement, or incentives for effective implementation and institutionalization. In the case of EBCE, two major categories of programs permitted some level of comparative analysis on the external aid issue. The government adopted two strategies for increasing and maintaining the number of operating EBCE sites. In the "categorical funded strategy"[1] the Part D sites were amply funded by the Office of Education for planning and operation for a three-year period, 90% of them in the range of $90,000 to $160,000 annually.[2] In the "non-categorical, non-funds assistance strategy"[3] pilot sites and market demand sites operated with different mixes of local, state, and federal money, but received only materials, training, and technical assistance from the NIE through the laboratories. A substantial proportion of this second group of sites secured external funding through their own means,[4] and programs in this category varied greatly in the amount of external aid and the proportion of the program budget that was externally supported.

The federal government wanted to learn about the impact of external aid and was therefore interested in a comparison between the sites that received categorical Part D funds to implement EBCE and those sites that received only technical assistance and training. In conducting research on EBCE, we sought answers to several related questions. Does categorical federal funding make a difference for program dissemination and adoption? What kind of impact does external aid have on program operation, and does the source of the funding matter? And does federal funding encourage program institutionalization by local school districts?

In several ways, federal money did make a big difference for EBCE. It stimulated widespread EBCE adoption, it enabled programs to operate with vigor, and it bought time for local advocates to strengthen their program base. The source of funding--the federal agency--and the resulting local program affiliation influenced the character of programs. But while external funding was often needed for program continuation, Part D grants did not seem to enhance prospects of EBCE institutionalization--largely because of more influential local economic and political circumstances.

Federal Aid and EBCE Dissemination

At the outset, federal funidng contributed significantly to the spread of EBCE. In a national survey of EBCE programs conducted by The National EBCE Association and analyzed by The Huron Institute in 1978, most of the respondent programs were supported more by federal funds than by either state or local money.[5] While only about half of the programs surveyed were in any way locally supported, and only a quarter received any state aid, nearly three quarters of EBCE programs nationwide were federally financed. And the proportion of individual program budgets composed of federal dollars was substantial: an average of 85%, more than twice the state share and three times the local share.[6]

Most of this federal support came in the form of funding through Part D of the Vocational Education Act. Of 50 programs that specified type of federal funds in the same survey, 37 had Part D grants; CETA and Title IV ESEA were among the other sources mentioned.[7]

The rapid expansion of EBCE across the country coincided with the first injection of Part D funding. Of the 108 programs responding to the Huron survey, only 15 were in operation by mid-1976, when the first Part D

funding cycle was announced.[8] In the next year and a half, the number of sites swelled to 90 as an increasing percentage of EBCE sites was supported primarily by federal monies. By mid-1978, almost two thirds of the programs received more than half their money from the federal government.[9]

In the short run at least, these figures raise questions about the notion of "leveraging" local support for innovations through federal seed money, as school districts viewed EBCE funding as "soft money" for providing budget relief along with a new program. During the three-year Part D funding cycle, fewer programs leveraged local funding than did not; that is, most Part D programs relied almost exclusively on federal money to operate EBCE. Indeed, in the restrictive fiscal atmosphere of the late 1970s, most local school executives reported looking to voluntary federal programs with substantial funding as opportunities to save money. By assigning staff already on their payrolls to EBCE rather than hiring additional staff, for example, local administrators were able to relieve at least temporarily some of the pressures of declining enrollments and shrinking school budgets.

This rather opportunistic approach to the adoption of EBCE was commonplace among Part D sites. Rarely was the Part D money viewed by local administrators as a means to make local money available for EBCE; more often, federal funding was seen as an end in itself. The districts that won Part D grants were often those that had good track records of federal grantsmanship, or thatwere well connected with the state education agency and were positioned early to compete for the one grant available per state. For example, a career education coordinator estimated that his district's annual budget of $70 million consisted of $10 to 15 million in federal grant dollars:

> Our school district is quite innovative for a midwestern district. We do a lot of proposal writing here, and there's

> a subtle pressure on us in the central office to stay on top of the RFPs and what's available out there.[10]

This district was a key member of the state's diffusion network, which put them in close contact with the SEA people knowledgeable about federal funding opportunities. The local career education director had a very friendly relationship with a state official, and reported, "he sent straight to me anything that was in the pipeline."[11] Part D funding for EBCE was in the pipeline in 1976, and this district won a grant award.

The career education director in a southern city was similarly versed in proposal writing and SEA communications, and reported that there was no competition for the Part D grant in her state, primarily because of the very tight schedule for submission of the pre-proposal. She was able to meet the deadline, however, because she had already written a proposal outlining her conception of career education for her district:

> I had a dummy career education proposal ready to go. I was waiting for some money to come along, and told the State Career Education people to let me know if they heard of anything. So I just had to shape it and bend it to fit EBCE's limits--for example, they made us use one of our models . . . . The plan was primarily for teacher training in career education concepts, to infuse it into the schools. I changed it to be like EBCE.[12]

In these two examples and in other Part D sites, the availability of categorical funding for EBCE served as a stimulus for adoption of EBCE-type programs. While these career education administrators were certainly interested in new program ideas, it was unlikely that their programs would have taken the form of EBCE, absent the federal funding earmarked for this purpose. Career education programs might have sprung up in these districts, but they might not have been called EBCE. The Part D funding strategy does seem to have stimulated widespread implementation of EBCE and its variants to an extent not likely to be achieved without this support.

Impact of Federal Aid on Program Operation

Another influence of federal funding is to strengthen local program implementation. Having substantial external funding from the outset seems to enable programs to develop quickly and effectively by supplying costly resources that would not likely be available on a local budget. In this way, the amount of federal money certainly can determine the initial vigor and vitality of the local programs.

With EBCE, as with most programs, there were needs that could best be met by money, and the Part D programs generally met these needs best. Some of the most "high-powered" implementation we observed occurred where Part D funding was available. These programs served more students, and at the same time could afford to hire enough staff to keep their pupil/teacher ratio at a reasonable level. They occupied well-equipped and often renovated facilities, and if school space was a problem, additional space could be and often was rented. Student and staff transportation--a major stumbling block for some pilot and market demand programs--was rarely an issue in Part D sites, as the budget could include rental of an EBCE bus or van, and mileage reimbursement for teachers. Project management hassles could be eased by hiring clerical and office support. And several Part D projects were staffed so that the EBCE project director could devote full time to administrative and public relations duties, including protecting the program's status and securing future funding. Thus federal funds certainly made quite a difference.

Three-year federal Part D grants provided project administrators with sufficient time and resources to nurture and develop their programs--a luxury not always affordable with tight local budgets for new programs. Knowing that the program budget was stable and guaranteed for three years,

local EBCE advocates reported that they could make modifications as needed, and at the same time plan for the future. One EBCE coordinator described how federal money had enabled him to gradually strengthen and adapt his program:

> You need enough money to be able to make your mistakes. It takes a while to get it the way that you want it, and you need the flexibility to do that. In the first year you're lucky to survive; in the second year, the program gets to working; and then in the third year, you make changes for transferring it.[13]

Conversely, lack of adequate financial support can destroy a program. A small amount of external aid can in some case be a vital ingredient for program success if adequate local support is not available. The question becomes, is there enough money available to do a fair job of implementation? Some pilot and market demand sites had adequate funding--or received state and federal funds elsewhere--and compared favorably with the Part D sites in terms of vigorous implementation. But other sites encountered difficulties that were directly related to lack of funding. There were local EBCE programs that had serious problems of space and physical facilities, and never overcame them. There were sites that had too few staff to do all the work required of EBCE but that tried nonetheless, whose teachers burned out after a year or two and whose programs collapsed. Other sites could not afford to provide the transportation necessary for students and teachers to get around the community, and therefore could not attract enough students to keep up their program population; and at least in some instances, these programs failed. So while federal money may not have guaranteed success by all measures in the Part D sites, it would certainly have been welcomed in some other locales that were attempting to implement EBCE.

Federal funding is thus helpful to local programs by buying them the time and atmosphere in which EBCE advocates can work out implementation problems. When a program is new and only beginning to gain strength, it is vulnerable to any number of afflictions, such as problems of space, transportation, and staffing. When the program is locally supported, these growing pains can turn into liabilities, as advocates of other programs compete for scarce funds. But when the support is external, a program is less vulnerable. Budget-conscious administrators and school boards have less reason to attack, and advocates enjoy the opportunity to work out the bugs and strengthen their program. Having such a federally funded "free zone" for implementation does not guarantee ultimate program success, but it is nonetheless an important way in which the federal effort has impact locally.

Funding Source and Agency Sponsorship

The source of federal money--the agency through which it flows--seems to matter as well, as it influences local program sponsorship and affiliation. Because funding source can determine who runs a program locally, there seems to be an important relationship between the source of the funding and the character or flavor of a local program. The Part D sites received their money not from the labs or from NIE directly, but from the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education in the U.S. Office of Education. This money came through the state Departments of Education or through the local school district, but was nearly always channeled through the vocational education division or department in that state or locale. For most Part D programs, local affiliation was with vocational education departments and constituencies. The following description of the funding and administrative arrangements in one of the sites we visited typifies the relationship between

funding source and local EBCE affiliation in Part D sites:

> They have a combined vocational and career education office here, and the career education programs are all kind of mixed in with the other vocational and occupational and cooperative education programs, and in some instances funded out of the same sources, e.g., the state voc ed money from [the State Director's] office. So in that way at least, the people in [this district] seem to look on career education in somewhat the same way as [the State Director] does: it's part of vocational education, or vice versa, and there is really no problem with funding programs through the same channels and housing programs in the same offices.[14]

Since the money came through and was administered by vocational education offices, programs sponsored in this way tended to hire staff with vocational education backgrounds. Teachers being one of the primary local influences on implementation, this meant that Part D programs tended in the direction of vocational education. Primarily, this influence was exhibited in the relative weight given to the various aspects of EBCE during implementation. We found that teachers trained in occupational or vocational education were more likely to emphasize the career exploration and counseling components of EBCE, while playing down the academic components. In sites that had a lot of contact with the labs, this may have been less true, as lab staff exhorted local staff to attend equally to all parts of the program. But left to their own devices--as many Part D sites were--the EBCE teachers did familiar things and used familiar formats.

Perhaps even more important, though, was the way in which vocational education affiliation colored local perceptions of some Part D EBCE programs, which in turn influenced how the programs turned out. In a district where EBCE was funded through the county Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education Office, administrators were adamant in asserting that they were "not running EBCE as a pre-vocational program--we're just administering it with voc ed."[15] And indeed, the learning coordinators here were hired from the

ranks of regular high school history and English teachers, not other voc ed programs. But for several reasons, this program was perceived as vocational education--and thus ultimately operated along similar lines and with a traditional voc ed student population. First, teachers in the high schools recognized that EBCE was administered by the county vocational offices, and viewed the program as part of that bailiwick; some even considered that the learning coordinators had shifted allegiance to the voc ed camp. Second, EBCE seemed to be filling the gap left by a failed pre-vocational program in one of the schools--and was seen by some as a replacement pre-vocational program. And finally, the grade level of the EBCE program suggested a pre-vocational function. That it was targeted solely to tenth-graders while vocational training programs in this county were for 11th and 12th grades suggested to many observers that the EBCE career exploration activities were intended as preparation for vocational choices.[16] Not surprisingly, these perceptions of the program resulted in referrals to the program of students considered vocational education material ("solid general" students as one assistant principal put it[17]). The EBCE program population was thus probably very similar to the composition of a "pre-vocational" program, regardless of intentions and rhetoric to the contrary.

Thus the state and local vocational education infrastructure occasioned by Part D funding was quite different from the arrangements in which most pilot and market demand sites operated. And this system of affiliations tended to provide some Part D sites with a different program flavor from that found in the other types of sites, more often sponsored by career education offices or curriculum administrators. In this way, the source of federal funding--and the sponsorship that is associated with the funding--has some impact on the character of the program that is implemented.

External Aid and Program Continuation

Where institutionalization is concerned, it seems that the presence or absence of federal money does make a big difference, and in a very direct way. Where external aid usable for EBCE support was available to a local district at the time of the continuation decision, the program was more likely to continue than where no external funding was in sight. Local decisions about whether to continue EBCE at the end of Part D funding of course involved a number of factors. Local people considered whether the program was perceived as successful, whether an identifiable student population had been served, whether the community supported the program, and so on. But chief among these factors was invariably money: the availability of funds and the relative importance of the local need or needs EBCE was perceived to serve. In most of the Part D sites, local funds (or state grants) were available and sufficient at the end of the three-year grant period, and the program was continued at some level with that support. But in that portion of the Part D sites with a less favorable fiscal outlook, little local funding was available, so the categorical federal grant was the sine qua non of continuation: if federal money was not available, the program was not continued as before. It was more likely cut back drastically, merged with other programs, or phased out. Part D grants were not themselves sufficient to insure continuation: often, additional external aid was required beyond the three-year period.

From our discussions with local people on this topic emerges an interesting picture of federal and local relations--one that suggests the appropriateness of viewing local involvement in and local commitment to federal programs as two quite distinct phenomena. Some local people suggested to us that they would continue their involvement in federally

sponsored and initiated programs such as EBCE as long as federal money continued to be attached--but that no one should be misled into thinking that their "commitment" to a program or a concept backed by federal funding would translate into long-term support of that same program absent federal funding.

One assistant superintendent provided a straightforward illustration of the prevailing LEA attitude toward federal categorical funding. His persistent theme in our interview was that when federal money is offered, local school districts will surely take it; but when it comes time to make hard choices--such as whether to continue a program with local dollars--districts will often make a different choice:

> If somebody gives you a Cadillac, well, you'll take it; but you might drive a Ford otherwise. You know what you can get the money for. The feds do workshops and so on to tell you how to get it.[18]

This local official was concerned that the mere availability of categorical funding influences how districts act and what they say, while the federal government fails to understand this effect. He believed that through its funding process, the government often thinks it is asking a district about its commitment to an educational idea, when in fact the question is more about the local desire for external aid:

> If the question is 'Do we need something like EBCE,' then the answer is yes. But if the question is, 'Do we want to trade a reading teacher for it,' well then the answer has to be no. And we would have had to give them the same answer three or four years ago [when we wrote for the Part D grant]. But that's not the question they asked. The question was 'Would you like an EBCE teacher?' Well of course we said yes and we thought that it was good for the kids. So we wrote a proposal for it, and believed in it, and all the rest.[19]

This sort of thinking about involvement with federal programs was more common than we expected, and suggests that at least some local administrators have come to accept a pattern of short-lived programs that disappear from the local scene almost as soon as federal money is withdrawn. On the one hand they complain of the disruptiveness and uncertainty that the federal funding system causes their school districts. But on the other hand, they recognize that as long as that system is in effect, they will play along with it and acquire for their districts whatever short-term funding gains are available.

These current observations on EBCE and the impact of federal funding may turn out to be an artifact of the times. It seems possible that the situation described here is exacerbated by the prevailing context of public education--a period of retrenchment and declining rates of growth. These observations may be true only in a tight economic climate. It seems likely, by contrast, that when more local money for education is available (as it was, for example, in the 1960s), federal funding will be less critical to decisions concerning program continuation.

But in the case of EBCE, it is clear that while the availability of categorical federal aid stimulated implementation, it did little to encourage institutionalization. Rather, the federal funding provided short-term program support to local districts.

Summary

The categorical funding strategy employed by the NIE and the Office of Education for EBCE delivered mixed results. While sizable three-year federal grants stimulated EBCE adoptions, strengthened local efforts, and influenced the nature of programs, they did not seem to enhance the likelihood that EBCE

programs would continue much beyond the three years for which they were funded.

For EBCE, federal funding was a successful dissemination strategy, encouraging program initiation in over 50 sites nationally. The rapid growth of EBCE was linked to the availability of these funds, as local administrators saw Part D monies as an opportunity to increase the local budget, maintain staff, and implement career education innovations. And categorical aid, through the proposal development and funding process, at least partly reshaped local ideas about career education to conform with EBCE models.

External aid also proved successful in supporting local implementation. Part D funds gave local EBCE efforts a "free zone" in which to grow and prosper, relatively safe from the usual pitfalls of locally sponsored "shoestring" innovations. At the same time, the funding channels and agency affiliations influenced the nature of Part D programs--often resulting in EBCE programs with a vocational education flavor.

For EBCE, however, three-year categorical grants did not seem to stimulate long-term program continuation. While the availability of other external aid at the end of the three years often influenced continuation decisions, the Part D grant did not seem in many cases to have "leveraged" local EBCE support beyond the grant period. On the contrary, there is evidence that these grants were largely viewed as short-term subsidies, rather than as the first phase of a long-term commitment.

Ironically, this seemingly weak effect can demonstrate a strong influence of the categorical funding strategy on local actions. The availability of categorical aid influences how district administrators relate to government agencies--what they do and what they say in their proposals. The opportunity to secure a large grant may in itself help to determine what type of commit-

ments are professed and what kind of programs are added to a district's educational agenda. When funded categorical money is available, it seems, local administrators will often accept it--and its conditions--simply because it is there. Federal categorical funding, then, while it may not always redirect local priorities or policies in a far-reaching manner, does influence administrative activity and attitudes. Making the money available with some strings attached encourages local schoolpeople to try particular kinds of innovations and to do them in certain ways.

NOTES

1. Memorandum from NIE official, November, 1980. This description of the federal strategies for EBCE was provided by a program officer of the NIE who had been involved with EBCE since 1975.

2. In a Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education document released in October, 1976, 41 approved Part D grant awards were announced for the three-year funding cycle 1976-79. Estimated first year grant amounts based on proposal requests by districts and states ranged from $2,332 to $239,545. Of these 41 awards, 36 fell into the $90,000 to $160,000 range; 2 were for less than $90,000; and 3 were for more than $160,000.

3. NIE Memorandum, op. cit.

4. Neither field data nor survey results provide an exact count of sites with neither Part D funding nor pilot status. One quarter of all EBCE programs were estimated to receive state funding, while nearly 3/4 had some sort of federal support; but data on market demand sites with external funding is not sufficient to provide an estimate of this type. See S. Stix and D.K. Cohen, The Implementation of EBCE: A Survey of Programs and Populations (Cambridge, MA: The Huron Institute, October, 1978), pp. 30-34.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 31.

7. Ibid., p. 32.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., p. 33.

10. Interview with Career Education Director, March, 1978.

11. Ibid.

12. Interview with Career Education Coordinator, February, 1978.

13. Interview with Program Coordinator, February, 1978.

14. Interviews with EBCE Project Director and EBCE Project Supervisor, April, 1977.

15. Interview with Vocational Education Coordinator, December, 1976.

16. Interview with EBCE Learning Coordinator, December, 1976.

17. Interview with Assistant Principal, April, 1978.

18. Interview with Assistant Supervisor, February, 1980.

19. Ibid.

V. THE STATE CAPACITY-BUILDING STRATEGY*

In addition to its methods for encouraging local implementation of EBCE, the NIE conceived a strategy for building EBCE capacity at the state level.[1] The idea behind the "state strategy" was to transfer the capability for dissemination from the NIE and the developer labs to the various state agencies, who in turn would act as disseminators within the states. In contrast to approaches aimed primarily at local school districts, this strategy was targeted at state education agencies, in the hope that SEAs would establish the capability to maintain and expand EBCE efforts in the years following the conclusion of NIE support.

The state strategy was initiated in 1976, when four states responding to an RFP were selected as NIE contractors. These states--Illinois, Wyoming, Nevada, and Texas--received NIE contracts ranging from $40,000 to $70,000 for each of two years. As participants in this program. these states were expected to develop technical assistance skills and institutional commitment to EBCE. Each state was to build a cadre of trainers in all four lab models, and SEA staff were to be trained and certified as competent by lab trainers. States were to evolve plans detailing who would be trained, what LEAs would be involved, what state and local support would be provided, and what were their long-range objectives for EBCE. Finally, they were expected to create some system of management or governance that would insure the involvement of all relevant groups in the state.[2]

That the NIE expected that the states would respond with different organizational structures and different levels of funding was reflected in the arrangement for training, in which NIE "banked" 90 days of training with each lab for each state; the states were then to work out their own training

* The research on the state strategy and the development of this section were mainly the work of Susan A. Stix.

plans drawing on the lab "bank." But the NIE expected the overall design of state responses to be similar. During the first year of the contract, the states were primarily to become familiar with each lab model and to develop a plan for implementation. In the second year, they were to implement their plans for disseminating EBCE to LEAs.

After the first year of the state strategy, NIE and state representatives drafted guidelines for the involvement of another group of states. Only lab training--no direct funding to SEAs--was available for this phase, and correspondingly less was expected of the 13 new states that were selected in 1977. Training of state personnel was maintained as a central element, but, based on experiences of the first-year states, it was recommended that each state work primarily with one or two labs rather than four. The states that joined the second round were Alabama, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Wisconsin.[3]

The Huron Institute studied state strategy activities in these 17 states, conducting 44 interviews with 27 SEA officials, EBCE program directors, and local schoolpeople as a basis for describing the state activities and analyzing implementation of the state strategy. To address questions about the effectiveness and persistence of EBCE implementation, various aspects of state capacity-building were explored. For each state, we inquired into administrative organization of the capacity, lab training received, state plans and activities for dissemination of EBCE, and persistence of state capacity beyond the funding and/or training period. State-by-state findings are presented in a series of profiles contained in a separate report.[4]

In the following sections, we describe the organizational patterns and

capacity of the states involved, and the amount and targets of the lab training provided to them. Then we discuss state plans and activities for dissemination of EBCE for local implementation. Finally, we explore the extent of persistence of state EBCE capacity beyond the funding and training periods.

Organization and Training

The states involved in the state strategy organized their programs in very different ways. Among the 17 states we surveyed, there was enormous variation in size, region, structure of the SEA, tradition of interaction with LEAs, and history of involvement with career education or vocational education. All of these characteristics played a role in how the strategy developed in each state and thus make it hard to generalize about a "typical" state. However, it is useful to provide a notion of the variety and spread encountered among the states we surveyed.

To begin with, differences among states were apparent with regard to their tradition of interaction with LEAs. For instance, in Wyoming, where LEAs are traditionally autonomous and conservative, the SEA viewed its role as coordinator and information broker. But in Nevada, where the state agency has played a more central role in curriculum and instruction, the SEA took on a more directive and supervisory role where EBCE was concerned.

Similarly, states' different histories of involvement with career or vocational education played a role in shaping the state strategy. In Nevada, the state's EBCE project was part of the state career education plan, while in Illinois, the state strategy was part of the SEA's Department of Vocational Education. In Texas, where vocational education was extremely strong, EBCE was part of career education and did not engender cooperation from vocational education groups. In Wyoming, by contrast, career education was set up as an element

of vocational education. These various traditions, in turn, had an impact on the amount of state funds provided for the state strategy, the level of interest in EBCE, the number and type of staff assigned to the program, and the ways in which states responded to NIE initiatives and organized their EBCE activities.

Among the early group, the Texas SEA worked through regional intermediate agencies, while in Nevada, SEA staff dealt directly with local schools. In Illinois, by contrast, the SEA and an affiliated university were linked to recruit, train, and provide services to LEAs. In Wyoming, a mix of state, local, and university expertise evolved. The same diversity occurred in the later group. In a few states, such as Wisconsin and Iowa, the state strategy de facto if not de jure came to reside in a very active LEA which acted as agent for the state's involvement. Another variation was that of Colorado, in which there were two separate state Departments of Education--both involved in the state strategy and EBCE--with separate jurisdiction and a different type of coordinating function. In Maine, the state strategy was formally entrusted to a non-profit organization. These organizational characteristics influenced the early shape of EBCE in the state agencies.

One aspect of the state strategy that was originally considered essential concerned training for SEA staff. As with the different organizational arrangements, there was great variation in training components--who conducted the training, who participated in it, and how much training was received. In Texas, for instance, the SEA proposed to have four or five persons from each of 20 regional intermediate service units (Educational Service Centers, or ESCs) achieve three levels of training in all four lab models. Eventually,

ten ESCs committed a minimum of 55 days of staff time each, with five ESCs opting for training in all four lab models. Wyoming chose to train eight people, two of whom were to be "brokers" for the four models. In Wisconsin, where most EBCE activity was at the local level, five SEA staff members received one week of training in AEL. In Nevada, by contrast, SEA staff expected to become fully trained in all four lab models.

In part because of the difficulties experienced by the first-round states in accomplishing their training plans, second-round states generally received somewhat less training and tended to rely on one or two lab models. In four states where there was substantial prior involvement with Part D funding, the SEA called on staff members in Part D sites to provide training. In five other states, the one person responsible for the state strategy received most of the lab training and was in charge of training local staff.

Training programs were adapted from earlier NIE plans in a variety of ways as complexities of lab, SEA, and LEA scheduling set in. The results were rarely satisfactory to the participants. Opinions expressed in interviews suggested that either there was not enough training, or it was not presented to the "right" people. Often training itself was considered a hindrance: participants cited it as too lengthy or not relevant to SEA needs, and the different requirements of each lab were too difficult to manage. However, in at least three states training was a source of pride, as when an official in one of them reported, "We trained 22 people." And in some places, training worked--as evidenced by examples of second-generation trainers.

It is difficult to tell exactly how much training occurred and how useful recipients thought it, but the various problems with training hindered replication of the program and recruitment of staff, and were thus a factor

in making the capability hard to transfer. Of the state people interviewed, not one cited training as central to their capacity-building program's success, while they did find that different lab models made a difference, or were better suited to their state than others. As a result, requirements for training were reduced in almost every state. At the time of the study, two thirds of the states contacted had modified or adapted aspects of training to suit their needs, and no state continued to rely on labs to provide training.

Dissemination for Local Implementation

Proposals for the state strategy were to contain plans for dissemination to LEAs. State staff members made very little mention of these plans; they were alluded to, but seen as useful in only one instance. However, a variety of dissemination activities did occur, of which some proved more effective than others. In general, activities seemed to serve a coordinating or communicating function more than active implementation, as SEAs stayed with their accustomed roles. The traditional measure of successful dissemination is the extent to which adoptions--brand new activities--occur, but it is useful here to broaden this concept to include support for activities already under way. There was evidence in about one third of the states contacted that LEA start-ups resulted from SEA recruiting. But often, SEAs were merely responsive, making themselves available as resource brokers, providers of technical assistance, coordinators, supporters of networks, and the like. Again, there was considerable variation in the means employed. In approximately half of the states, the SEA organized meetings; but as the participants seemed to be primarily staff of existing programs rather than new or prospective implementors, the meetings tended to reinforce rather

than expand the network of EBCE sites. Another activity consisted in presentations to career education conferences, but again, this served to create awareness rather than aid active recruitment. In two states, Wyoming and Colorado, the SEA goal appeared to be to add one site per year, a relatively modest expansion plan.

In about one third of the states, there was no clear boundary between SEA activities and Part D activities; that is, the SEA seemed to piggyback state strategy activities onto other activities organized by EBCE sites within the state. In a variation of this pattern, a SEA claimed an active Part D program as its own, citing it as a product of the state strategy.

Institutionalization of the State Capacity

To what extent has the capacity endured in states? To answer this question, we defined institutionalization as a program's adaptation for survival--that is, locally supported continuation of the program in some form. We looked for evidence of organizational commitment, such as local "hard" funding and bureaucratic indicators of stability. Overall, SEA involvement in EBCE lacked such funding and indicators, and was weak in the areas of well-formulated procedures and follow-up. However, EBCE nonetheless persists--in varying degrees--in about one half of the states. Several features of NIE's early plan have been realized: people have been trained, programs have started, programs have received support, connection has been made with other career education programs, personal commitment and program networks have been generated. It is clear that these states have made the program their own, and in so doing have strengthened it to survive in the local environment.

In the interviews we conducted, state-strategy staff members named

several recurrent characteristics that influenced endurance, and discussed several problems states encountered in their efforts to build capacity. Chief among these were reliance on a key individual, budget considerations, and reorganization within the SEA.

Frequently, the responsibility for the state strategy came to rest on the shoulders of one person. In one third of the interviews, a key person was seen as crucial to early enthusiasm for the program as well as to a state's continued involvement. In addition, in states where the transfer of capability was successful, this seems to have been due to one or two key persons. This is a recurrent theme and seems to be the single most important factor to success. Ironically, it is also the feature than can lead to speedy disappearance of the program, as it implies that when that person leaves, the capability disappears. This has, in fact, happened in about one fourth of the states we studied, as key SEA staff moved, were transferred, and so forth. A related characteristic is that these key people were often peripheral in the organization and thus highly vulnerable to SEA reorganization, although personally committed to the program. And despite public relations, and in some states seed money, EBCE was primarily perceived as an add-on to existing responsibilities--one in which there was little organizational investment. It is interesting to speculate on why the program responsibility often rested with one or two key individuals. Alternatives, presumably, would have been reliance on materials, on a group of people, or on the organizational structure itself. But in only one state was there evidence that this kind of capacity was built. This widespread lack of organizational investment suggests a lack of commitment to EBCE.

Funding commitments are another indicator of organizational commitment to the program. Among staff members interviewed, there were widespread

complaints about lack of funding. On one hand, these concerned the lack of continuing state and local support. On the other hand, they also expressed a feeling that the original federal allocation had been too modest to get the program off the ground.

In general, the EBCE state strategy seemed subject to the vagaries of federal and state funding, floating from one source of soft money to another. When the money was withdrawn, program activities tended to subside. In Texas, for example, shifts in funding priorities resulted in a contraction of EBCE activities. Shifting funding priorities can also be seen in the ways in which states attempted to secure funding for EBCE. One official commented that he referred local programs to CETA sources because "That's where the bucks are," while other states were not able to develop satisfactory working relationships with CETA. At least three states supported "EBCE-type" programs with funds authorized by the Career Education Incentive Act. However, other states, citing what they thought was OE policy restricting use of these funds to "infusion" of career education activities into classroom-type programs, believed that EBCE--with its emphasis on out-of-school activities--was not eligible for support. Still other states looked toward support from more powerful or affluent interest groups, such as bilingual or migrant education, or vocational education. In two states, the SEA created financial incentives for LEA adoption by offering reimbursement for students enrolled in EBCE under provisions of Vocational Education.

Bureaucratic problems also made the capability hard to transfer. One third of the states underwent reorganization of the SEA during the time they were involved with the NIE state strategy, some of them two or three times. Since SEAs tend to be rather fragmented, this often required the state

strategy to change to accommodate the new structure and assign EBCE to a different division of the SEA. One frequent result of reorganization, whether related to staff cutbacks or shifts in funding priorities, was that the same person retained responsibility for the state strategy, but was allocated less time for the tasks involved. Sometimes responsibility for the program shifted--to follow a change in funding source, or when funding sources for other programs seemed potential sponsors for EBCE. Reorganization that resulted from changing political influences--budget cuts by state governments or changes in chief state school officers--also influenced SEAs' ability to implement EBCE.

Institutionalization was also affected by SEA staff members' perceptions of EBCE as an add-on to their usual work. These were due to a mix of factors--the organization of SEAs as well as the chronology and structure of dissemination developed by NIE. There seemed to be a strong tendency, on one hand, to confound the state strategy with other approaches to EBCE, especially Part D, and on the other hand, to view EBCE as an add-on. In over one-fourth of the states, the SEA relied on expertise and support from an operating Part D site. In some instances, the SEA went so far as to attribute the Part D success to SEA activity. In Illinois, this was acutely felt, as the SEA was responsible for both Part D and the state strategy--and treated them as one, with responsibility for both located in the same office and with the same person. This is an unusual case, but it illustrates the significance of careful timing in the dissemination process. A spokesman from the Illinois SEA observed that the state strategy "came too soon" after Part D to get both programs operating. In three other states, it appears that the exposure received by an active Part D program may have instigated

start-up of other programs, which in turn called on the SEA for technical assistance, training, or other support. And at least three further states relied on a Part D program as the demonstration site for their state strategy activities. Hence, there is a complicated relationship between Part D sites and the state strategy; Part Ds may have delayed implementation of the state strategy to some extent, but may also have encouraged other LEAs to become involved in EBCE operations.

Another recurrent factor in this mix was a lack of ownership felt by certain SEAs. A common refrain voiced in several states centered on the "add-on" to staff duties. EBCE was seen as extra. Staff felt that they were being asked to carry out a program that the labs had developed. As a state official observed, "They can't just expect us to take over . . . and pick up what they've left behind." On the other hand, however, states seemed eager to claim responsibility for successes, even when SEA involvement consisted simply in being informed of EBCE activity in the state. This is consistent with the self-image of most SEA staff as more a coordinator than a disseminator, and it is clear that about two thirds of the SEAs functioned more as respondents to LEA requests than as initiators of LEA activities.

Summary

The state strategy seems to have served a variety of purposes with different degrees of activity and success. Given the limited federal control of states and the strong tradition of state autonomy, it would be naive to expect that state plans and local programs would assume the same shape from place to place. In states as in local school districts, local influences had a lot to do with how things turned out.

In 1980, four years after the strategy was initiated, the state EBCE activity followed several routes. In two of the 17 participating states, the state capability does not appear to have gotten off the ground. In two states where the strategy showed early promise, and in four that joined the second phase, EBCE state capability has almost disappeared. Thus, in almost half of the states contacted, the capability has not taken root. However, in four states, talk of EBCE activities continues and there is evidence of implementation, although weak. Finally, in five states there is real action and the capability appears strong.

But the capability of almost all the SEAs is in jeopardy due to its apparent reliance on soft money and its generally low place on SEA priority lists. There is a great deal of personal commitment to EBCE, but it more often applies to EBCE "concepts" than to concrete elements of a program--concepts that proponents hope to work into other career education activities. In contrast, there is seemingly little commitment by institutions or organizations. Though there are notable exceptions, state strategy programs typically depend on unpredictable funding, or internal or state politics, and there is some distrust of federal initiatives or sponsorship.

While considerable state involvement has occurred, it appears not to have stimulated program stability. Short-term "commitment" to a program that is federally funded does not readily translate into long-term support of that or a similar program absent federal funding. Although short-lived programs that disappear as soon as federal funds are withdrawn set up a local pattern of uncertainty and instability, they do provide short-term funding gains that states are eager to realize.

Given the enormous variation in organizational structure, key people,

and budgets, the mere continuation of state responses to the NIE strategy is a significant outcome. However, these responses are largely administrative and mechanical in nature, and thus perhaps peripheral to the fundamental questions of implementation and persistence. With regard to the more significant question of the growth and development of EBCE activity, the data presented above show much less variety, suggesting relatively low capability, little state initiative, and weak organizational commitment.

It is both an asset and a liability, then, that EBCE is so malleable. While the lack of fit between the early lab prototypes and the individuality of SEAs might have proved fatal to a program less flexible than EBCE, the program is nevertheless threatened by its failure to secure institutional commitment. It is clear that states tend to reshape and adapt federal initiatives to suit their own preferences, and to improvise in order to enhance local program effectiveness. Hence, the program's influence may continue in informal and modified ways. But in general, although quite a bit has been accomplished at the local level, the capability does not seem firmly entrenched at the state level.

NOTES

1. This description is drawn from the following NIE sources: Notice of Request for Proposals for Establishing State Capability for Experience-Based Career Education (Education and Work Group, National Institute of Education, July 1976); Planning Conference for States Holding Contracts to Develop Implementation Capability for EBCE (Lana Muraskin, October 1976); Guidelines for the Continuation of the State Strategy for EBCE (Lana Muraskin, August 1977).

2. Muraskin, October 1976, op. cit.

3. Five other states were identified by NIE as states in which no activity ever materialized. These were: the District of Columbia, Florida, Massachusetts, Mississippi, and Montana.

4. Refer to the report by Susan A. Stix and John E. DeSanctis, State Activities in EBCE: Descriptive Profiles (Cambridge, MA: The Huron Institute, September 1980).

V. THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF EBCE

One of the central research questions of this study was whether and how federal policy encouraged persistence of EBCE. We wanted to know whether EBCE continued after federal subsidies and assistance terminated, in what form it continued, and what lasting impact it had on the local education system. We asked what happened to EBCE--the program, its components, and its ideas--after active federal influence came to an end. In sum, we wanted to know whether EBCE programs were "institutionalized" in the sense that, without undergoing substantial change, they became a stable feature of the local educational landscape.

But we were interested as well in the persistence of federal innovations in some form other than the original program. We thus also explored EBCE programs that were changed drastically, that were greatly reduced in size, that were merged with other programs, or that were officially discontinued. In those EBCE sites where the federal programs were not totally incorporated by the district, we sought evidence that EBCE concepts, activities, and methods survived in other contexts.

In this study we conducted repeated observations of program sites over a four-year period, and witnessed 22 programs as they moved from an early implementation phase, characterized by federal influence and EBCE status as a "special program," into a phase often called the institutionalization period, marked by local redirection and modification. For pilot and market demand sites, which had been operating for as long as six years at the time of our final observations in 1980, the transition occurred gradually as they progressed from moderate federal influence (through the regional laboratory's presence in the district) and strong financial support (both local and external)

into a period of diminished outside influence and support. For Part D sites, the transition was more abrupt. At the end of three years of federally supported implementation, each site decided whether and how EBCE would continue. Our final observations of Part D sites occurred in the year following these decisions, when the surviving programs had entered their "institutionalization" phase.

The Concept of "Institutionalization"

From the outset of this study, we recognized that the idea of program continuation called for additional conceptual development and refinement, given the range of definitions in currency today and the trend toward using continuation as an indicator of program success. The dominant view of this phenomenon focuses on the continuation of a federal project or program in toto --with the same or about the same name, size, and level of effort--beyond the period of federal subsidy or assistance. If it survives in that form, the program is said to have been "institutionalized."

Program institutionalization has been a concern of EBCE sponsors and advocates at both federal and local levels. The organizers of The Third Annual EBCE National Network Conference in 1979 proposed institutionalization as the theme of their meeting, and provided a working definition of an institutionalized program:

> In so far as there is any consensus, the institutionalized educational program is one that is a) thought to pursue acceptable, "mainstream" educational objectives, b) relatively stable and consistent in the way its services are organized, c) part of the budget (pre-zero based) consisting of the "lightly" scrutinized continuation base, and d) supported by dependable and influential constituents.[1]

The view that federal programs should be picked up locally goes far beyond EBCE and other educational innovations: it provides the rationale for all

federal "seed money" projects. While EBCE itself was rarely characterized as a seed money project by the NIE or the program's participants, it would seem to merit this designation according to the definition provided by the General Accounting Office in a recent Comptroller General's report to the Congress:

> Federal grant programs which are designed to limit the length of time federal funding is provided are commonly called seed money programs. These programs work under the assumption that federal support will end and that grantees will continue projects with funding from non-federal sources.[2]

The Comptroller General's study of the status and success of seed money programs is of interest here because it illustrates the breadth of concern over the issue of program continuation, and suggests that there are problems with the "heavy reliance on project continuation rates as the primary measure of success" of federal efforts.[3] The scope of the study is very broad, including programs in several federal agencies (HEW, DOT, ACTION, and NSF), totalling around $2 billion yearly. Although the review suggests that some seed money programs "have created some self-sustaining projects and have generated significant use of non-federal funds in priority areas," the main findings are that most projects are reduced or discontinued when federal funds end, and that some other projects are funded further by federal agencies in an attempt to keep them alive a while longer.

The report observes that it is not clear why the government decides to make some programs seed money programs while others remain in the "conventional grants" category, suggesting that the division is arbitrary. The reasons given by federal officials include avoiding permanent federal control over some controversial areas; limiting the duration of federal funding

commitments; and freeing funds for other priority programs when they arise. Generally, the report sees seed money programs as attempts to stimulate state and local governments to fund projects they would not otherwise fund.

> An effective seed money program could (1) provide funds for national priority programs with high start-up costs, (2) alter state and local priorities so that non-federal funds are used for federal priorities, and (3) distribute scarce resources broadly to have a continuing impact on the population to be served.[4]

The report goes on to say that, given a lack of clear objectives and rationale for the seed money approach, it is hard to evaluate these programs. But one measure of success is the "rate of project continuation with non-Federal funds when Federal support has been phased out. Ideally, all worthwhile seed money projects would continue when Federal funding ends."[5] Thus program continuation is built in as a goal of federal activity: institutionalization is inherent in the mission of seed money projects.

Recent research has amplified the notion of institutionalization, suggesting that there is more to the phenomenon than can be described as an either/or condition. Rather, the literature suggests, program continuation can occur in varying degrees and in any number of configurations. In its study of federal programs supporting educational change, the Rand Corporation added the concepts of assimilation and incorporation to the definition of institutionalization. An externally supported program might be "incorporated" officially by a local school district after the federal presence had ended, or its methods and practices might be "assimilated" by individual teachers in schools and classrooms. Institutionalization occurs when the change intended by the federal project becomes "part of the standard educational repertoire at both the district and the classroom level."[6]

The Rand study concludes that in most cases the innovations funded by federal seed money have not taken root. They estimate that only 5 to 15 percent of their national sample of federally sponsored projects were fully institutionalized approximately two years after federal funding had ended. Three other kinds of outcome are more likely, according to Rand: (1) discontinuation, which occurs when a project is dropped or allowed to die a slow death; (2) isolated continuation, when the project is supported inadequately by the district but its methods or materials continue to be used by staff in schools and classrooms; (3) pro forma continuation, when the district establishes the innovation as official policy but very little of what occurred under federal funding is continued in classrooms.

Rand was right in pointing out that educational programs are not always either go or no-go--that they are often continued in more subtle ways than programs relying on hard technology. Federally sponsored educational innovations are to some degree institutionalized if key district staff continue to use their methods and practices, even though the program per se--its budget, staff, and program title--is discontinued.

The Continuation of EBCE

In the case of EBCE, we found that there is indeed more to the story of program continuation than a simple go/no-go decision about a federal program. We observed great variation in the extent and type of program continuation in the districts we studied, as the sites presented a contiuum of ways in which federal programs evolved after the initial "project" period. Continuation is not always readily apparent and can be a complex object of study. In the case of EBCE, a recent federal survey attempted to establish a "rate" of continuation; a closer look at the results of this effort illustrates the limitations of that approach.

At the end of the major Part D funding cycle (in October, 1979), the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education (BOAE) of the Office of Education conducted a telephone survey of 41 EBCE projects funded by BOAE through VEA. The survey was designed primarily to establish whether EBCE projects were continuting after federal funds ended.[7] The report of the results suggested a rather high rate of continuation.

> There are 36 projects continuing into the 4th year on other than Federal funds--most on local funds, some with CETA funds, some with state funds or a combination of these.[8]

Closer inspection of the responses from local programs, however, does not substantiate such an unequivocal depiction of EBCE persistence. Comments made by school district people demonstrate clearly that "continuing" might mean maintaining EBCE much as it was in the Part D grant period ("continuing at the same funding level as with federal funds"); but it might just as well mean greatly modifying EBCE and reducing the scope of the project ("continuing at 1/3 the level of federal funding"). In fact, 15 of the 25 sites that specified their EBCE budgets for the first post-Part D year reported that they would continue at a level of effort below that of the three-year federal grant[9] (Table 1).

Table 1: Reported Year IV Funding Levels

	Funding Level $\geq$ Part D	Funding Level $<$ Part D	Funding Level Not Specified	Project Not Continuing	TOTAL
Number of Sites	10	15	11	5	41

Thus, although 36 projects were in fact "continuing" in some manner, it seems clear that there is considerable variation among sites.

The Huron Institute's field research on EBCE uncovered even greater variation in the extent and character of program continuation than these partial data suggest. For EBCE, we found that the continuation phase meant many things, ranging from full local support for maintaining the program unchanged, through major program modification and reduction, to total discontinuation. Some EBCE programs were incorporated fully, while others stayed the same in substance but were reduced in size. Some underwent drastic changes when budgets were cut as federal funding ended. Others were merged with similar district programs. Still others were formally discontinued, although individual staff members assimilated EBCE activities and methods.

Program Incorporation

Of the 22 programs we observed repeatedly, 10 continued unchanged after external aid was withdrawn, without significant observable modifications. The local districts absorbed all the costs (often using non-categorical federal and state aid of varous types), supported the same personnel allocation and instructional program, continued to provide facilities and support services, and so on. These programs no longer held special status, but became routine: they had been "incorporated" into the normal operations of the school system. In the year following termination of Part D funding, three of the 12 Part D sites on which we conducted follow-up research continued basically unchanged and with local support at the same level. Four of seven pilot sites were institutionalized at this level, as were three of the four market demand sites in our sample. In one respect, then, Huron field research verified the earlier BOAE survey: the rate of full program incorporation for EBCE was well ahead of the norm for federal education innovations.

Programs that survived in this manner were able to maintain stability in the face of numerous changes in context and climate. They exhibited bureaucratic indicators of program incorporation, such as support from the district or school building core budget ("hard money"). They often had tenured staff assigned to the program, and they enjoyed formal administrative, school board, and community commitments of enduring support.

In these districts, both fiscal support and administrative commitment were critical factors in incorporation. In some locales the support came from the top, as district executives maintained their endorsement of EBCE and obtained additional federal or state funds to continue the program--although often substatial modifications were required by the new funding arrangements. For example, in a town where EBCE had been a pet project of the superintendent, his assistant argued that this helped to explain its persistence:

> What's different . . . with EBCE [as distinct from other programs] is that it started here in the central office with [the superintendent] and myself. Most federal projects don't have that kind of support from the superintendent's office.[10]

This support was concrete, and took the form of an operating budget even larger than under Part D. The local board of education absorbed the salaries of four of the five EBCE staff members, and a newly acquired federal grant paid for the fifth. The new funding was from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped (BEH) for an "adaptation" of EBCE for special needs students. This spin-off "runs much differently" than EBCE, although based on EBCE concepts: the students spend far less time in the community and work with different academic teachers. But the BEH project was meshed with EBCE administratively, and was viewed by the assistant superintendent as part of the successful continuation of EBCE.[11]

In other districts, support for EBCE incorporation came not from the central office or federal funds, but from the building level. Perhaps most important for EBCE continuation in these sites was the support of the school principals, and their willingness to absorb the program into their building budgets. While the decision to adopt EBCE in the first place--obtaining Part D funding and initiating the program--was often made by district executives, the decision to provide continuing support necessarily involved building principals, since they often have at least partial control of school operating budgets. How school principals felt about EBCE was thus an important factor in continuation. In the words of one county career education administrator who had enlisted his principals in the EBCE cause: "EBCE needs to be attractive enough for principals to support it . . . . The principal is so key here."[12] In this district, gaining the support of the four high school principals was the central strategy for ensuring EBCE persistence. Even before writing a Part D proposal, the career education director took all four of them to a laboratory to see EBCE in action. They interviewed candidates for the EBCE coordinator's position and suggested how the federally funded program should operate in their schools. In addition, the career education director regularly had breakfast with the principals. His goals was to build commitment to EBCE.

> I think that all the money in the world won't necessarily change things, unless you get people's attention and their commitment. You're talking here about those people who have the most clout in overcoming the barriers to change in public education. The strongest change agents are the principals.[13] They can effect that change . . . .

This view of the power of the principal in deciding what happens to EBCE was echoed elsewhere. One district career education director argued that

principals have more power in these matters than is readily admitted by central administrators.

> The principals report directly to the Director of Secondary Education. But his philosophy of leadership is none at all. So in effect, we have eight superintendents in the district--and the principals are on their own.[14]

Even in districts where EBCE was not fully incorporated, the key role of the principal was often mentioned. Indeed, failure to win principals' endorsement was offered as a major reason for limited support for the program. In one county where EBCE staff complained of weak program leadership, there seemed to be no full-time EBCE advocate at the county administrative level. At the end of the Part D cycle, the high school principals exhibited little sense of ownerwhip of EBCE. They still saw it as a "county program" and were reluctant to support it out of building-level budgets."[15]

Reduction in Effort

Other programs continued to operate much as they had under federal support, but on a reduced scale, due to budgetary constriction following termination of federal funding. Four programs fell into this group--two Part D programs, one pilot, and one market demand. For one of the two Part D programs, a decision to "cut out the frills" when absorbing EBCE into the local budget meant that the external evaluation contract and laboratory assistance were dropped, and that staff and student transportation costs were no longer reimbursed. But all staff salaries were picked up by other funds and EBCE remained in all the high schools in the county, serving about the same number of students. In the words of the project director, the budget cuts meant that EBCE was only "very slightly different" from its days as a Part D-funded program.[16]

The other Part D program in this category suffered a greater budget cut, but also operated much the same as before. Its budget was reduced by half as the district picked up the costs, and the director and her secretary took pay cuts. But high school principals absorbed staff costs into their general budgets. The four learning coordinators were assumed by the four EBCE high school budgets, as "each principal agreed to allot one staff [slot] to EBCE."[17] So while the central program budget for EBCE showed a significant reduction, and in fact administrative services were cut, the school programs maintained their identity and integrity in all significant respects.

Major Program Changes

Four of the 11 Part D programs underwent major changes as they made the transition from federal to local support. Although they remained nominally EBCE programs, they were so drastically cut back that their nature was greatly altered. In all of these sites, smaller budgets meant that EBCE changed from a full-time program to a part-time elective course in the high school, and that fewer teachers were available to work with EBCE students. In all cases, the academic component was dropped, and EBCE became primarily a career exploration program.

In one of these sites, local concern about "cost-effectiveness" was translated into major budget cuts for EBCE, as the program was "pared down and restructured."[18] A full-time project director was replaced by a half-time supervisor, and the program lost its own office and secretary as it moved to the town's vocational education office. In the three schools, the principals each determined the new program format for their own buildings. In one school this meant an "independent study approach," with no class time for EBCE, while in another it meant one hour a day for a career awareness

class; in all three schools, the principal decided that EBCE students must get their academic learning in traditional classroom settings.[19]

In a second program, staff and student numbers were reduced as the school district provided a much smaller EBCE budget. In one year the project staff was cut from three learning coordinators, a placement coordinator, a director, and a secretary--all full-time--to one learning coordinator and a half-time secretary. In that same period, the student roster was cut from 37 to 15. The learning coordinator was certified only in English and business subjects, and most of the students' academic program was returned to the regular classroom. "That's one of the major shifts, I'd say," the project director observed with some dismay, of the changes at the end of the federal funding. "[The academic component] was one of our strengths with this program."[20]

In another locale, EBCE was redesigned for the third year of the Part D cycle so that it would attract local funding, according the the program coordinator:

> We wanted to develop the project to where it was transferable, so we made changes between years two and three, to prove that it was transferable and to show that it would work.[21]

These changes consisted primarily in moving the program from one high school into four and in changing its nature, especially by dropping the academic focus in EBCE.

> We also took out the supportive academics--English and Math . . . . All the academic part did was allow us to have a block of time . . . to get the kids out of school . . . . The emphasis in our program was always on the activities outside the school, and not on the academics. The Math and English teachers were only put in to accommodate our needs. Our emphasis was not there--we wanted to get kids into the real world.[22]

In this site and one other, these changes were accompanied by an expansion of EBCE from one to several high schools in the district. As the program evolved into something less ambitious than previously, it also was altered in ways that made it easier to implement on a wider scale.

Merger with Other Programs

In another variation on the continuation theme, EBCE programs were absorbed into other programs, or themselves absorbed other programs. For example, a formerly autonomous EBCE program became part of the vocational education program, losing some of its independent status and program identity in the process. Two of the pilot programs formerly outside the high school mainstream were made part of the academic departments in attempts to stabilize them and at the same time provide some organizational support.

A Part D EBCE program was renamed "experience-based education" as it was merged with three other vocational education programs under a new "umbrella" program offering several out-of-school options to high school juniors and seniors.[23] The new version was only loosely based on EBCE as all program components except career exploration were dropped, and the time spent on that was cut roughly in half. Vocational counselors were put in charge of all four "educational options" in the eight county high schools; EBCE staff positions were eliminated, although former learning coordinators filled two of the four new counselor slots. The supervisor of vocational education reported that the new arrangement resulted in a "different student population" and more time spent in traditional classes.

> [The students] don't spend quite as much time out in the community, but this makes educators pleased, I think. A lot of people weren't convinced of that part of it.[24]

He also felt that there had been too much time out of school when the program was funded by Part D and adhered closely to one of the lab models, but argued that the changes resulting from program merger had strictly budgetary causes. "This is the only way we can afford to do it," he reasoned, stressing that the district considered its approach to continuation the only financially feasible route after termination of Part D funding.[25]

Formal Discontinuation

Another sort of continuation was that programs were formally discontinued but persisted--with changes--under another name. For example, in some sites major organizational shifts occurred, perhaps for budgetary reasons: EBCE was removed from the central office budget as the principal absorbed its costs into the general operating budget of the high school. In some cases of this type, though the formal EBCE program was phased out, individual teachers continued to use program ideas, materials, and methods in other settings.

One such program had operated as an alternative high school under Part D funding. When it disappeared in the following year, several kinds of EBCE activities continued. The alternative school had closed, but a residue remained. Four former EBCE teachers worked at new jobs in various high schools, and taught two-hour courses in "career and life planning" (to fewer than half as many students as the year before). The academic component was gone, and the course became a combination of career counseling and exploration of occupations in the community. But a project coordinator, his secretary, and part of the teachers' salaries were supported by a central office budget item for this EBCE mutation, and the network of community sites remained intact. It was argued that EBCE in this site had actually "spread" in a curious way: while new activities were less visible, they were becoming

infused into the regular high school curriculum.[26] In a pilot site where EBCE was completely dropped after four years of implementation, such arguments were not put forward. But even there, one teacher who had been with the program from the beginning, and who returned to teaching social studies in the same high school, continued to work with groups of four and five students on EBCE-like projects--an apparent assimilation by one teacher.[27]

Program Demise

Finally, the program can be discontinued and leave no visible legacy. When federal support is withdrawn from the district, the program is terminated, its activities cease, and its supporters vanish. We observed only one EBCE site--a pilot site--that fell into this category. Its program had never really got off the ground, and was discontinued after only a year and a half of implementation. It had operated on a shoestring budget, had been inadequately staffed and under-enrolled, and had had serious problems of transportation and community support. When the district's finances worsened and all "non-essential" programs came under scrutiny, it was no surprise that the board voted to drop EBCE. And as implementation had been weak and short-lived, it is also no surprise that the program left no traces in the district.[28]

Phasing Out Federal Programs

We suspect that the continuation effects observed here are transitory, especially in the case of the Part D sites. There is some evidence from our field research that during the first year after federal funding ceases (and perhaps for the first two or three years after this break point), districts are likely to be involved in a process of phasing out EBCE programs. Local district administrators reported to us that they do not like to drop a

federally funded program abruptly, for several reasons. First, some of them are personally and seriously committed to programs of the EBCE type and want to continue them in their districts indefinitely, irrespective of federal funding. These superintendents and program directors try to maintain EBCE or remnants of it for as long as they possibly can, even in the face of declining budgets and internal political debate over which programs will survive. Other administrators are reluctant to eliminate the program after the three years of federal funding because they think it looks bad locally. They report that there is great symbolic value in continuing a program like EBCE, especially in districts where it has been so targeted and organized as to serve a student population in great need, or to respond to the concerns of an important local interest group.

Still other local administrators, well aware that in these days federal agencies care about local program continuation, are anxious that their school system not be thought to lack concern for the persistence of its federally funded efforts. They often did not want to drop EBCE because they feared that they might jeopardize future funding possibilities by allowing EBCE to be quickly terminated. These administrators reported that they wished to inform Washington that they will not automatically drop future federally funded programs like a hot potato when the money runs out. One assistant superintendent explained why his district would continue partial support after Part D funding terminated, even in the face of local budgetary constraints:

> We're not going to kill it--we'll pick it up partly. [The superintendent] thought that it was too good a program to kill, and besides, we had put a lot into it. We don't want to appear that we're disinterested [sic], and you have to remember that we want to get the next grant. We can't just eat and run.[29]

This dilemma was reported in the Comptroller General's report on seed money projects, cited earlier. Local people reported they "felt trapped by [such] programs," which were "fishhooks--easier to get on than off."[30]

For these reasons and possibly others, several school district executives told us that the first year after the Part D funding period was deliberately treated as a "transition" year. In these districts, the program was supported at a significant proportion of its earlier level (roughly half the budget), and was expected to be phased out thereafter. That might mean that the budget and support would be reduced again in the second and perhaps the third year, until there was very little left of EBCE. Alternatively, there might be only one transition year of support for a significantly reduced program, after which EBCE would be no longer supported at the district level. It would be allowed to "die quietly on its own," in the words of one assistant superintendent.[31]

This transition from full federal support through partial local support to no local support seems to occur in several ways. In one model, the school board and central administration go on record as strongly supporting EBCE at the end of the federal funding period; but while endorsing the program, they leave the funding up to individual school buildings and building administrators. It is then the task of school principals to find in their general operating funds the money to continue the EBCE programs that have been operating in their schools, or serving their students. In most cases, building principals respond not only to the mandate to continue, but to an established EBCE constituency of students and parents, and perhaps staff; at least they do so for the first year. They reallocate staff, assign space, and see that the program is funded at some level while the attention of the school board and administration and public eyes are upon them.

In another model of transition, the school board and administration provide some school district funds to support the continuation of EBCE for the next school year. Because of the annual funding and budgetary procedures in most districts, the board rarely gives more than a one-year commitment to externally funded programs; it is only when a curricular or program effort is built into a line item on a department or school building budget that it need not be reappropriated yearly. While some local administrators assured us that one-year continuation funding for EBCE would likely be renewed, others confessed that they did not intend to ask for it in the following year. They saw it merely as transition-year funding to ease the program out. We suspect that other administrators had similar plans or will take similar action, but were not willing or able to tell us so.

Summary

The story of EBCE suggests that some federal policies might be more effective than others in encouraging program continuation, and that a mix of strategies might be most effective. Yet local factors--demographics, finances, and attitudes--may ultimately carry the greatest weight in determining whether and how school districts continue federal programs. True "institutionalization" is rare, as local schoolpeople continually modify programs and practices long after the federal presence has come to an end.

As for the impact of the two chief federal strategies for EBCE, funding and technical assistance, it seems likely that the less expensive of the two was the more effective in stimulating persistence of local activities similar to the EBCE programs initiated by the government. There is some evidence suggesting that T & TA is associated with a higher rate of persistence than is categorical Part D funding. Nine of 13--or over two thirds--of T & TA

sites (pilot and market demand sites) were found to have maintained programs basically unchanged or changed only in size; but of 11 Part D sites in the study, only five--or fewer than half--continued more or less intact.[32] These numbers are small, and so the comparison is inconclusive. It nonetheless suggests that, at the very least, categorical funding, while possibly necessary from a variety of other perspectives, might not be an efficient strategy judged solely in terms of stimulating program persistence. Perhaps providing direct assistance to sites is more effective, as well as less expensive.

More conclusive than findings about the comparative impact of the two main strategies is what EBCE suggests about the effect of a mix of federal strategies for implementation and institutionalization. Compared to other federally sponsored innovations, EBCE's short-term continuation rate was quite high. Well over half of all sites provided evidence of continuation of programs, of components, or of practices--a proportion well above the norm. It would seem that the multiple-strategy approach employed by the NIE was successful in stimulating persistence. Indeed, the very confounding of federal policies that made research on EBCE difficult probably contributed to the success of the program. Federal funding, lab assistance, and state involvement were rarely isolated influences on EBCE sites. More often, local programs were influenced by all of them, in varying mixtures. Most sites felt the impact of several policies, and it is probable that this multiple-strategy approach had significant long-term effects.

But federal policy does not tell the entire story of EBCE continuation. Potent though the cumulative impact of federal strategies may have been, local factors ultimately determined whether and how EBCE continued. The attitudes of parents, students, and staff mattered, and especially the commitment of

school principals to the program. Local enrollment trends mattered, as the number of students EBCE could attract was a key predictor of its survival in locales where declining enrollment and fierce competition for students had become the order of the day. And, of course, the local fiscal situation may have been the most critical factor in determining what occurred. Shrinking district and program budgets were the chief reason EBCE programs were cut back or discontinued, while adequate funding--whether local or obtained from external sources--was a prerequisite for more extensive continuation.

A caveat is required at this point in the discussion. The "phasing out" or transition-year phenomenon described here suggests that the unit of analysis used in this and other studies on program continuation has its limitations. Studying the level and extent of program continuation in the first or second year after federal funding ceases is probably too soon to perceive the more permanent local outcomes of federal program efforts. What can be observed is a form of continuation, but it is likely a special form. We suspect that this transition period, as suggested above, may extend into the second and even third year with some programs--especially those that were subsidized for several years before federal funding ceased, like EBCE Part D programs. To examine and understand the effect of federal efforts in the long run, it probably makes good sense to study program continuation several years after federal support has ceased.

Even as we have argued elsewhere that policy formulation and policy implementation are not two distinct phases of federal programs--since local people make policy while improvising on federal initiatives[33]--neither are implementation and institutionalization two distinct phases of local program

operation. Rather, school districts continually modify federally stimulated activities in any number of ways. In some instances, federal programs are converted into local programs, and are built into local routines. In other situations, certain program elements are incorporated and others discarded, as the federal programs themselves disappear when--or soon after--federal incentives are withdrawn. Decisions concerning the status of innovative programs recur regularly: the "final" decision to institutionalize them is rarely made. Federal innovations are not institutionalized in the same way as other local programs--at least not for a good number of years, if they survive. Perhaps institutionalization as currently used in federal R & D nomenclature is a misnomer. It is not the second and final stage in the life of innovation; instead, there are many stages, levels, and types of incorporation and acceptance. True institutionalization takes time, and few programs will live that long.

NOTES

1. Program Note from The Third Annual EBCE National Network Conference, February 19-21, 1979, San Antonio, Texas.
2. "Federal Seed Money: More Careful Selection and Application Needed," Report to the Congress by the Comptroller General of the U.S., G.A.O., 1979.
3. Ibid., p. 35.
4. Ibid., p. 1.
5. Ibid., p. 3.
6. Paul Berman and Milbrey McLaughlin, "Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change, Volume VII: Factors Affecting Implementation and Continuation" (Santa Monica, CA: The Rand Corporation, April, 1977).
7. Internal Office of Education Memorandum, October, 1979.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Interview with Assistant Superintendent, June, 1980.
11. Ibid.
12. Interview with County Vocational and Career Education Director, April, 1978.
13. Ibid.
14. Interview with Career Education Director, March, 1978.
15. Site Visit Summary Field Note, April, 1978.
16. Interview with EBCE Director, December, 1979.
17. Interview with County EBCE Coordinator, February, 1980.
18. Interview with EBCE Project Director, December, 1979.
19. Ibid.
20. Interview with EBCE Project Director, February, 1980.
21. Interview with EBCE Program Coordinator, February, 1980.
22. Ibid.
23. Interview with Vocational Education Supervisor, December, 1979.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Interview with EBCE Coordinator, February, 1980.

27. Interview with former EBCE Teacher, March, 1979.

28. The astute reader will by now have noticed that the number of sites mentioned in the discussion of various types of continuation adds up to more than the number of sites in our sample. The explanation, of course, is that these categories are neither clearly discrete nor mutually exclusive, and for illustrative purposes some sites have been mentioned more than once.

29. Interview with Assistant Superintendent, February, 1980.

30. Comptroller General's Report, op. cit., pp. 13 & 15.

31. Interview with Assistant Superintendent, February, 1980.

32. Counts based on the discussion in this chapter provide the following distribution:

	Training and Technical Assistance				Categorical Funding	
	Pilot	Market Demand	Total		Part D	
Incorporated	4	3	7	= 69%	3	= 45%
Reduced Scale	1	1	2		2	
Major Changes	0	0	0	= 29%	4	= 54%
Merger	2	0	2		1	
Formal Discontinuation	1	0	1		1	
Demise	1	0	1		0	
TOTAL	9	4	13		11	

Our thanks to Ron Bucknam of NIE for suggesting this type of comparative analysis.

33. Eleanor Farrar, John E. DeSanctis, and David K. Cohen, "Views from Below: Implementation Research in Education" (Cambridge, MA: The Huron Institute, 1979).

VII. THE LEGACY OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

In the previous sections of this report, we have considered the impact of federal policies on local programs. We have analyzed federal strategies and their effects on the local program phenomena sometimes called implementation and institutionalization. For this discussion we have adopted primarily a federal perspective, defining these phenomena as stages or phases in federal/local interactions: the "implementation" phase has been presented as beginning with the federal presence in the district (in the form of funding or assistance), and the "institutionalization" phase as beginning when that federal presence is substantially withdrawn. The discussion has focused on the impact of federal policy as evidenced in local activities during these two program phases.

Using the implementation and institutionalization framework to look at federal impact is in some ways appealing; and it is of paramount interest to the federal officials who fund the programs and the research on them, and who want to know how effective are the strategies at their disposal. But the framework is also confining, for the definition of desirable outcomes strictly in terms of program operations and continuation (even of different level and kind) severely limits our understanding of federal/local interactions. It implies that only a small range of program-related effects is acceptable, and it ignores the possibility of broader and more enduring effects. It is not surprising, then, that with this narrow view of desirable outputs some observers find a low rate of incorporation--even for a relatively successful federal innovation such as EBCE--and conclude that the federal effort was largely a failure.

But federal intervention need not be so viewed, even from a top-down perspective. By using a somewhat wider lens, we can consider some of the more diffuse effects of federal policy, and so arrive at a more sophisticated appreciation of federal impact. Perhaps these two program phases as generally defined are not the only appropriate categories in which to range the desired effects of federal innovations. Perhaps what is needed is other ways of assessing the impact of such innovations--ways that reflect the many local configurations of the evolution of the program. We may need to look beyond the strict bounds of the program, at its broader effects on the school district and at what it leaves behind--the legacy of federal activity. It makes sense to explore how federal policy results in system changes, as well as how it affects the program itself. It is possible that using more refined categories of assessment would produce more varied judgments about the success or failure of the federal effort--and would lead to different kinds of recommendations for policy formulation.

The study of EBCE suggests that there may be broad and long-lasting local effects of federally sponsored programs that often go unrecognized. In our site visits, we observed that even where program-specific activities and practices had waned to some degree, the broader legacy of EBCE can still be documented. There are various indirect and secondary effects of the innovation, some of which are worth considering in judging the value of this type of federal activity. These effects include program spin-offs; personnel training and diffusion; interest group legitimation; affirmation of staff philosophies; and community support for the schools. No doubt there are others yet to be discovered, but these categories appeared most prominently in our analysis of EBCE implementation thus far.

Program Spin-Offs

Ideas, methods, and practices introduced into the district by EBCE have been adapted and re-invented, and have emerged in other new programs, sometimes themselves funded by federal or state monies. This is quite different from the isolated continuation of certain EBCE practices by individual teachers: here newly created programs use some of the ideas introduced to the school or district by EBCE. For example, in one district the program was cut back so drastically after the end of federal funding that the National Directory for EBCE listed it under the heading "discontinued and no longer identifiable EBCE programs."[1] The project director was left with very little to direct, but was still supported by the local board during the transition year preceding the program's planned demise. He reported that he had developed a new after-school program for gifted and talented students. With the major industries that he had recruited for EBCE, he set up a community exploration program in science and engineering for college-track seniors. In this district EBCE had been targeted for problem students, whereas the new program (described as strictly "more a field trip type of thing") was designed to introduce students to various scientific and academic careers available in their community and involved no coursework or counseling. But it was based on the EBCE career exploration model, and almost exclusively used the network of employer resources developed by EBCE staff.[2]

In several other districts, programs for the handicapped have been adapted from EBCE ideas, as federal and state funding was made available for innovative approaches to providing special education services. One Part D site that continued EBCE with state and federal funding also started up a new project to develop their own "handicapped model of EBCE," funded by a

three-year grant from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped.[3] This town thus had two EBCE programs: the original project serving "normal" but under-achieving students, and the new project for the physically handicapped. Although run separately and quite different in operation,[4] the spin-off program was directly adapted from EBCE ideas.

Personnel Training and Diffusion

It has been argued elsewhere that staff who are trained for and live with innovative programs carry that experience with them into other jobs in the district. An assistant superintendent made just that point: that when the EBCE alternative school broke up and the counselors were assigned to different schools, they took with them a new way of counseling and of relating to students. Although their program had been cut severely and was being phased out when we made our final visit, he believed that the "residue" of EBCE could be found not only in the program which remained, but also in the practices of the staff members who had been trained for and worked with EBCE.

> [These people] are now in four different schools . . . . That's got to make a difference. I think we'll always be somewhat better here because of this . . . . I know that we're all different because it happened. There's no doubt about that. It was and is successful.[5]

This appreciation of the broader effects of EBCE was not an isolated instance. In another site, the former EBCE coordinator became director of special services when federal funding was terminated and the program mostly eliminated. But he remained an advocate for EBCE, and was emerging as something of a grantsman for the district. When we visited during the following year, he had on his desk several proposals in various stages of preparation, all of which included EBCE ideas tailored to the different requirements of the funding agencies. He argued that, given the district's experience with

EBCE, future EBCE-like activities were very likely, and he planned to work to make them a reality.

> If I could develop a new program in the next few years that would key off of EBCE, I think we would have the [necessary community and teacher] support . . . . I don't see that it's dead . . . . In fact, it already has [reappeared] in several ways. For example, the industrial arts coordinator and I have had several long conversations about preparing kids for jobs in the community, . . . beyond just the skills they're getting now. He's come around a lot to programs like this. Plus, the social studies and science people support these ideas. There's still the possibility of putting kids into the community using EBCE materials and concepts. Maybe this won't happen next year, but it could be the year after.[6]

On paper, EBCE was gone from this district, or soon would be; but it was still alive for this influential supporter. He told us that "if you come back in three years, I venture to say that you'd see a lot of what we say is dead now will resurface in some form if I'm still around. And I plan to be around."[7]

Legitimation of New Constituencies

In some districts it seems likely that certain groups--especially parents and students--gained a new voice in the school district through their EBCE involvement. In a Part D site we visited, the program served primarily average to low-achieving students, those who were having problems in high school and were in danger of dropping out. As the first program established to serve these students in this small town, EBCE spawned a brand new interest group. The superintendent reported that the parents of EBCE students had been mobilized in this district, which had traditionally responded primarily to the parents of the above-average students. When it came time for the board and the Town Meeting to review EBCE and determine whether to continue it beyond the federal grant, these parents had become a force to be recknoned with.

> [Our] Town Meeting deals with education and other issues, and a lot depends on who turns out . . . . The firemen, for example, always get what they want because they turn out in force. Education does not traditionally have that kind of constituency here. But for EBCE, significant numbers felt that the program was very successful for their youngsters, especially . . . with "borderline" kinds of kids not necessarily distinguishable, but having some problems. EBCE in a number of instances had very great effects for those kids.[8]

A new interest group had appeared and taken action, as parents attended meetings and argued in favor of continuing EBCE. The superintendent later observed that the program served families who were "powerful as a block, and who rendered a positive judgment about EBCE."[9] He continued:

> They convinced the board that it was not only financially feasible, but politically and educationally feasible as well . . . . The board perceived that it was politically in their interest to keep the program. [The EBCE Director] was able to line up a number of families to come down to the meetings and speak about the program. The program developed a constituency of the type that no other program in the district has ever developed.[10]

The board listened, and the program was fully maintained through local support. Through their involvement with EBCE, a previously powerless group of parents had gained an effective voice in the school district.[11]

Affirmation of Teachers' Educational Philosophies

EBCE contained no revolutionary ideas about teaching and learning. But it combined familiar ideas in an unusual way, and served as a vehicle for introducing them into several districts in a formal, sanctioned manner. When that happened, district staff who had propensities toward certain non-traditional pedagogical styles, for which they had previously received little programmatic or emotional support, reported that EBCE lent validity to their tendencies.

The superintendent of a small, conventional district called EBCE the catalyst for initiating individual instruction in that town, in reinforcing the preferences of some staff for a certain style of education. "For the staff, EBCE provided at least an operating model for dealing with kids as individuals, rather than as groups of 25."[12] While individual instruction was not new to the district, its isolated practitioners had not previously been formally encouraged, as they were through EBCE.

> I'd say that there were islands of it present in the persons of system staff, and that the program provided an object lesson and reaffirmed the philosophy and point of view of the people who felt that way.[13]

In the superintendent's opinion, individualized instruction had increased throughout the district during the years EBCE had operated. And he felt that this was more than mere coincidence: that EBCE was a strong force in stimulating these systemwide changes.

Community Support for the Schools

In several districts, this program provided the first occasion for classroom teachers to have extensive contact and working relations with the business and professional community. By recruiting sites to work with EBCE, the program staff developed lists of hundreds of community people who could be called on to provide various services to the schools. These networks endured and continued to be of value to school personnel, especially in providing community support for district programs. One EBCE director described community attitudes toward EBCE in his city after the program had been dismantled:

> I think there is community support for programs like these. Our career education task force is still going strong. They are aware of programs like EBCE and are strongly in favor of them; in fact, they're quite vocal about it. These are mostly businessmen, union people, and cultural leaders. They were involved with [EBCE] from the start, as we took the proposal to them for their ideas. So they're firmly on board.[14]

In another site, a high school principal argued that EBCE "opened up the community to the schools."[15] He told how the EBCE community liaison person at the school had learned that two Israeli students were visiting the local office of an international construction company with ties to the Mideast. This staff member, who had worked extensively with the company, used his contacts to arrange to have the two students visit the school. The principal was thrilled by this event and the local press coverage it generated, observing, "We get lots of public relations for the schools from things like that."[16] He also felt that having students out in the community probably went far in increasing public support of the schools.

> The best PR we have is when a lad goes home and is generally positive about school. That says something to the parents and the community. And if the parents or the community sees the kid reasonably responsive, attentive, and trying to do a good job, then that's a message about the schools. The employers can have a negative attitude about the schools, but they change their attitudes through EBCE. I've met people in the community who come up to me and say they're now 'linked to the school' through EBCE.[17]

The public relations value of EBCE for some districts seemed significant. In several cases, the community support EBCE had generated had already been tapped for new programs that relied on the same kinds of resources.[18] Thus while EBCE as such had faded in these districts, other school-and-work programs came into its legacy. Seen in this way, the success of other programs is a broader effect of EBCE.

Summary

EBCE seems to have had several indirect effects, broader and more enduring than those usually measured by program evaluation. Even when the program as such was terminated by a school district, it left its legacy. Residual effects could be observed, for example, in the form of program

spin-offs, altered staff attitudes and pedagogic methods, new constituencies, greater use of non-traditional teaching practices, and community support for the schools.

If we examine the outcomes of other federal innovations not merely in terms of implementation and institutionalization but from a wider angle of vision, we may find similar long-term effects. This may be particularly true of voluntary, complex, broad-aim programs such as EBCE, which directly or indirectly stimulate systemwide change that survives the programs themselves. If such "unanticipated outcomes" indeed result from federal program efforts in schools, then the influence of federal reform activity, though not immediately obvious, may be far greater than is generally believed.

NOTES

1. Experience-Based Career Education Programs National Directory, Far West Laboratory, San Francisco, CA, September, 1979.

2. Interview with EBCE Coordinator, February, 1980.

3. Interview with Assistant Superintendent, December, 1979.

4. Interview with Assistant Superintendent, June, 1980.

5. Interview with Assistant Superintendent, February, 1980.

6. Interview with EBCE Coordinator and Director of Special Services, February, 1980.

7. Ibid.

8. Interview with Superintendent, June, 1980.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. This effect is similar to Title I being credited for organizing the parents of low-income elementary students; the difference is that Title I mandated parent groups, while for EBCE this was an effect predicted neither by the developers nor by federal officials.

12. Interview with Superintendent, June, 1980.

13. Ibid.

14. Interview with EBCE Coordinator, February, 1980.

15. Interview with Principal, February, 1980.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Interview with EBCE Coordinator, February, 1980.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In this report, we have discussed both the federal policies and the local effects of Experience-Based Career Education. We have observed that the NIE employed a mix of strategies for implementing and institutionalizing EBCE, including regional program development, training and technical assistance, direct funding to school districts, and transfer of EBCE capacity to state agencies. The ways in which these federal steering mechanisms influenced school districts are explored in some detail in an attempt to illustrate their impact on the adoption and implementation of EBCE programs.

We also considered what happened with EBCE programs as the influence of federal policies waned. During that phase of program evolution, programs were continued in many diverse ways; "institutionalization" of EBCE turned out to be a complex and open-ended phenomenon. Furthermore, certain effects of federal activity went beyond the parameters of the EBCE programs themselves, and we outlined some of the dimensions of the legacy of EBCE in school districts.

This description of the local responses to EBCE highlights certain tensions, both within federal strategies and between federal agencies and local school districts. These help to explain much of what happens with federal reform efforts and remind us that we know very little about the true impact of federal policy.

Replication versus Persistence

There is an inherent tension in the federal intentions and strategies for disseminating and implementing innovation. Federal agencies seem to want both faithful replication of program models and long-term persistence

of local programs. Perhaps the central government should take this position; but to the extent that great fidelity to program plans may fail to meet certain district needs, the stance is fraught with tension.

Formally, EBCE dissemination and implementation strategies were designed to encourage widespread adoption of the innovation, and subsequent faithful implementation of program models. Laboratories were to develop and package programs and train people to reproduce them locally (with necessary modifications), and federal money was to subsidize districts to "implement" the models. The government provided money, materials, and assistance to help local people do EBCE well. That is, the federal strategies were designed first and foremost to provide for faithful replication of EBCE models and ideas.

But at the same time, these strategies could serve local ends, not always closely related to high-fidelity implementation. Part D funding provided school districts with money to work out an enormous array of local agendas, of which some were closely aligned with EBCE ideals while others amounted to substantial adaptations. The training and technical assistance provided did much more than ensure fidelity: lab staff supported local staff in numerous ways, including helping them to modify the program so as to blend in and survive locally.

There was ample flexibility in the federal strategies employed with EBCE to make them serve both fidelity and persistence. Whether the strategies were used to achieve replication or adaptation depended primarily on the predisposition of local people in their use of EBCE. Where a school district was concerned with replicating a lab model, the federal

resources were often marshalled to this end, in many cases with admirable results: local programs were in some cases high-powered copies of lab models. But where in the district's view the program model only partly matched local needs, the product was sometimes a greatly modified local version. The needs and priorities of local staff thus helped to determine how the federal strategies were put to use.

In varying degrees, NIE and the labs were very concerned that local programs follow plans and procedures that had been tested and validated at such great expense. Yet at the same time they understood the need for local change, and so tolerated the use of federal strategies for secondary adaptive purposes. While funding and training were provided for one purpose--high-fidelity implementation--the government knew that they were often used for another--adaptation. And local people were drawn to EBCE in part by the flexibility of these government supports.

In many ways, then, the tension between replicating EBCE models and adapting for persistence was a healthy one. The ambivalence of the federal government about its role in implementation resulted in a situation that benefited almost everyone involved.

Central Reform and Local Agendas

Federal reform ideals and local school realities do not always coincide. While federal agencies may have had far-reaching school-improvement agendas, school district reasons for innovation were usually far more modest and grounded in local needs and constraints.

Concern over the institutionalization "problem" is rooted in the hope that widely disseminated federal innovations will result in wide-spread institutionalization. The assumption is that school districts

await and are open to federal school improvement programs and will snap them up if the technology and dissemination strategies are appropriate. But that assumption merits close inspection. The story of EBCE suggests that federal innovations are often of marginal interest at the local level, and tend to be seen locally as passing phenomena, fads and fashions that flit across the local landscape. Local school administrators can be interested in innovation without necessarily being commited to lasting reform. They might welcome innovative programs for a variety of reasons, including bringing additional external funds into the district and attacking a nagging local problem in a new way. But the decision to continue a federal program or let it fade away is constrained by many factors, among them the local climate of opinion and the current financial situation.

The difference between trying a federal innovation for a while and institutionalizing a reform was compared by local people to the difference between accepting a gift and paying to keep it. Viewed this way, the "failure" of federal programs to survive might not seem so surprising. Indeed, that school districts continue programs such as EBCE in any form--reduced in size, merged with other programs, changed significantly--might be seen as a tribute to the attractiveness of the program.

Program "Success" and Federal Impact

Assessing EBCE in terms of its broader and longer-lasting effects suggests that its impact was considerable. We observed certain local phenomena that seem to be indirectly due to the federal policies employed for EBCE--among them, other new programs based on EBCE concepts, enduring changes in district staff attitudes and teaching methods, newly empowered

constituencies, and community support for the schools. The effects of EBCE seem to extend well beyond the scope of the program itself.

What do these findings suggest for evaluating federal programs, a government activity that shows no signs of subsiding? One approach would be to search for different effects when assessing the impact of policy--effects like those just mentioned, for example. In addition to implementation and other institutionalization and traditional student outcomes, then, other processes and effects become research variables.

Sensible and appropriate as this approach might be, however, there are several problems in its application. Many indirect and secondary effects of federal policy are hard to find and document. It takes years for some of them to show up in the field, often long after federal attention has shifted to other arenas. The farther removed in time the effects are from the program treatment, the more difficult it is to establish the links. And of course, questions of this type may be of less interest to federal agencies, which want to know whether their investment in specific policy strategies pays off in demonstrable short-term results. Yet ironically, a narrow focus on the more easily measured payoffs of federal activity militates against an appreciation of the ultimate breadth and depth of federal influence.

Thus there is a paradox inherent in the picture of federal impact and program success provided by the case of EBCE. Federal programs exhibit many diverse and often desirable effects at the local level, but we are often not attentive to a good portion of those effects, however important they may be in the long run. It is clear that federally sponsored programs may have local impact that is considerably broader and more enduring

than has traditionally been recognized. But that realization does not translate easily into conclusions about program success; indeed, the question of program success remains unanswered in this view and even becomes more problematic than before. The more we look at broader issues and outcomes in program evaluation and research, the harder it becomes to determine "success" and "failure" of the federal effort. When we concentrate on a narrowly focused range of program outcomes--as federal agencies need to do in many instances--answers about success are somewhat more likely, although rarely unequivocal. But our view is too restricted to expand our understanding, and we fail to appreciate much of the impact of federal activity.

There continues to be a need for narrowly focused research, as evaluation studies are required that attend to specifically intended program outcomes. But it is a serious error to allow the results of such studies to dictate policy recommendations of a broader nature. If the salient questions of the research have to do with the system impact of federal policy, then the answers should not be derived only from narrowly conceived studies of specific program-related outcomes. By including broader and more enduring effects in the research design, the government can deepen its understanding of the impact of its activities. Whether or not answers about the success of federal policy would follow, a less simplistic view and a greater appreciation of federal impact is likely to result.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

THE METHOD OF THE STUDY

In its implementation study of Experience-Based Career Education, The Huron Institute employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. The various products of the study (see Appendix B) contain data resulting from both types of data-collection methods. The data resulting from qualitative data-collection methods are presented in most of the reports in the series, while the quantitative data are the substance of other reports. But in all of the study products, the analysis draws on both qualitative and quantitative data.

The study included survey research on EBCE programs and communities adopting EBCE. Survey data were collected either directly by The Huron Institute or by the National EBCE Association, who passed them on to Huron for analysis. In addition, extensive telephone interviews were conducted with EBCE programs around the country. The methodological approach used for the collection and analysis of survey data is described in the individual reports.

The data analyzed for the study's final reports were collected by qualitative and naturalistic methods, employing semi-structured interviews and observations. The field research was conducted by four staff members of the Institute; with the exception of two site visits during the four-year study, all of the field work was done by this small staff of people working in close collaboration.

The following discussion is concerned with the selection of sites for field research, the field research schedule over the course of four years, the conduct of the field research, and the recording and analysis of data.

1. SITE SELECTION

The Huron Institute elected to use the best-case example in selecting sites for intensive field research. This decision rested on the view that EBCE was a secondary school reform of considerable complexity that would be difficult to implement under the best of circumstances. We concluded that given the limited amount of field research that could be undertaken, more could be learned by studying sites that had reportedly enjoyed successful experiences with the program. Nomination for sites that seemed to be successful were solicited from the four developer labs and the National Institute of Education. On the basis of their recommendations and several other dimensions, a diverse group of sites was selected for the first year of research, and others were tentatively selected for future study. Over the course of four years, 45 sites were visited (Table I).

Table I

EBCE SITES

Fresno, California
Oakland, California
Saugus, California
Portland, Connecticut
District of Columbia
Broward, Florida
Florida Consortium
Orange County, Florida
Joliet, Illinois
Wichita, Kansas
Fayette County, Kentucky
Cumberland, Maine
Baltimore, Maryland
Worcester, Massachusetts
Parkway, Missouri
Carson City, Nevada
Fallon, Nevada
Reno, Nevada
Virginia City, Nevada
Western Nevada Community College
Washington Township, New Jersey
North Syracuse, New York
Staten Island, New York
Ohio SEA
Hillsboro, Oregon
Tigard, Oregon
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Washington, Pennsylvania
Greenville, South Carolina
Dallas, Texas
ESC #20 (San Antonio), Texas
Fort Worth, Texas
Mt. Pleasant, Texas
Sulphur Springs, Texas
Salt Lake City, Utah
Weber County, Utah
Colville, Washington
Kennewick, Washington
Cabell County, West Virginia
Kanawha County, West Virginia
Cheyenne, Wyoming
Laramie, Wyoming
Lander, Wyoming

The sites chosen included a cross-section of rural, urban, and suburban locales and of geographical regions. They were also spread across the four developer labs, in order to ensure that their various interpretations of EBCE would be equally represented. Table II shows a very even spread among labs.

Table II

FREQUENCY OF SITES BY LAB MODEL

Lab Model	Number of Sites
Appalachian Educational Laboratory	12
Far West Laboratory	10
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory	13
Research for Better Schools	10
Total	45

Further, the selection procedure was designed to take into account the variety of policy variables that were differentially applied across sites for EBCE implementation. These included the amount of training and technical assistance, the extent of federal funding, and strategies for dissemination through other organizations, notably SEAs. Variation in the kind and amount of support local districts received is reflected in the categories of sites (described below) included in the study: pilot, VEA Part D, market demand, and state strategy sites were well represented (Table III). The Huron Institute also visited all four EBCE demonstration schools operated by the developer labs. Table IV displays the distribution of category of site by lab model.

Table III

FREQUENCY OF SITES BY TYPE OF SITE

Type of Site	Number of Sites
Demonstration	4
Market Demand	6
Part D	19
Pilot	11
State Strategy	8
	48*

*Three sites were counted under both Part D and state strategy.

Table IV

DISTRIBUTION OF TYPE OF SITE BY LAB MODEL

Type of Site	Lab Model				Total
	FWL	AEL	RBS	NWREL	
Demonstration	1	1	1	1	4
Pilot	2	3	3	3	11
Part D	4	4	3	8	19
Market Demand	3	3	0	0	6
State Strategy	0	1	3	4	8
Total	10	12	10	16	48*

*Three sites received multiple designations at the state level, as they were funded partly under Part D and were also state demonstration sites under the state strategy. In this table, they are counted once under each of those two categories.

A. Pilot Sites

Sites designated as pilot sites were the comparatively few LEAs that were the first to adopt and implement EBCE when the program was made available to local districts. The pilot sites received training, technical assistance, and materials from the developer labs in return for evaluation information across various dimensions of implementation activities. These sites received no direct federal subsidies. Their designation as pilot sites was a result of their work with the individual laboratories. Eleven pilot sites were included in The Huron Institute study.

B. VEA Part D Sites

The VEA Part D sites began implementation activities during the second year of the Huron study. Sites in 42 states received VEA grants averaging $130,000 each per year for three years. As a result of regional information meetings held by the OE offices to inform applicants about the four EBCE models, districts which applied for Part D funds selected one model to adopt, and as a rule worked with the developer lab in preparing a proposal. Districts which were awarded contracts then purchased training and technical assistance services from the laboratories. While most VEA sites purchased some services, the kind and amount varied greatly, ranging from the complete T & TA lab package to virtually no lab services at all. The Huron Institute included 19 VEA Part D sites in its study. Once again, the sites were, with NIE and lab assistance, selected to include a representative spread among lab models, geographical regions, and districts or program sizes.

C. Market Demand Sites

Market demand sites were those that chose to adopt and implement EBCE without official lab assistance or federal VEA support. As a rule, however,

most of these sites did receive a modest amount of assistance, and sometimes training, from the labs. During efforts to identify these sites, Huron discovered that they were very elusive. Rumors abounded about where districts were implementing EBCE, where they were about to adopt, how complete the adoptions were, and so forth. And for the most part, the labs themselves had very sketchy information about the range of market demand activity in the country, particularly as the study progressed and more districts became involved. Huron's work in this study dealt with six market demand sites.

D. State Strategy Sites

The NIE's state strategy for disseminating EBCE was launched in the second year of the Huron study. The notion behind the strategy was to develop within state education agencies the capability to disseminate EBCE to local districts. SEA staff were trained by the developers of the lab models, in order to maximize the opportunities for choice at the local level. During the first year of the NIE state strategy, four states were each funded by NIE for two years at approximately $100,000 per year. The following year, 13 additional states were included in NIE state strategy. The latter received no federal support, but like those that joined the first phase, they received free training, technical assistance, and materials from the laboratories. The Huron Institute study included 17 state agencies involved in the state strategy and eight state-capacity LEAs in those states.

2. FIELD RESEARCH SCHEDULE

A. NIE and the Labs

The Huron Institute visited the NIE staff and the developer laboratories

each year of the study. In particular, lab visits included conversations with all of the field staff in order to learn about events in the sites being studied, and to keep informed of changes in the models as they were being implemented, changes in the training programs and materials being developed by the labs, and changes in the ideas and practices of the field staff. Most EBCE lab documents were reviewed, particularly the successive generations of implementation materials. Evaluation reporting by the labs was reviewed as well.

B. Sites

Year I. Huron staff visited 22 pilot, market demand, and Part D sites for one to seven person-days each, with an average of three person-days per site. In addition, we attended NIE conferences on work and school and met EBCE staff members there for formal interviews.

Year II. Huron visited 27 VEA Part D sites, pilot sites, and market demand sites, over half of them in revisits. One to five person-days were spent in the VEA Part D sites, depending on the amount of activity at the site (many of them were engaged in early start-up activities). Also during this year, Huron visited the four states first involved in the NIE state strategy and eight LEAs in those states, and attended meetings.

Year III. The study included visits to 10 pilot, market demand, and VEA Part D sites. These were mostly revisits of approximately two person-days each. In addition, states involved in the state strategy were studied, LEAs revisited, and meetings attended.

Year IV. Huron revisited 11 VEA Part D, pilot, market demand, and state strategy sites for one to three person-days during this final year of field research. In addition, intensive telephone interviews were conducted with

others, and with states implementing EBCE. The meeting of the National EBCE Association was attended, and formal interviews were held at that meeting.

During the course of four years, approximately 200 person-days of research were spent in the field. Total person-days spent at any one site ranged from one to 12, with three fourths of the sites being visited from one to six days.

3. CONDUCT OF THE FIELD RESEARCH

A. Document Review

All program materials relevant to local EBCE programs were reviewed as districts made them available. Student projects and reports, evaluation results, teacher-made materials, PR brochures, and films were among them.

We reviewed and analyzed three broad groups of documents. First, there were technical documents concerned with program start-up and operation. These included such items as requests for proposals, EBCE proposals, state plans for implementation, trainer certification catalogues, staff training schedules, and evaluation reports. Second, we reviewed documents designed for public relations, dissemination, and recruitment. These took a variety of forms: facts about EBCE, parent opinion surveys, interest surveys, career exploration/orientation/options, student selection. Finally, materials related to day-to-day aspects of EBCE operations were examined. Each site produced some of the following: newsletter, student handbook, learning plan, curriculum guide, policy manual, occupation guide, resource person guide, checklists.

B. Interviews

The field research involved interviews and informal conversations with the local district staff involved with the program. Others at the local

level who were interviewed varied from site to site, since the interview schedule was arranged by local staff and did not always meet The Huron Institute's request. In virtually every district, however, we were able to meet with the school district administrators and personnel whom we had asked to see. At the central office level, this included superintendents and district personnel in Career Education, Vocational Education, Secondary Education, and Guidance and Counseling. At the school building level, interviews involved principals and assistant principals, the director of guidance and/or guidance counselors who referred students to EBCE. Selected teachers not formally involved with EBCE, representing various academic departments and special subject areas such as reading, art, and vocational education, were also interviewed. In addition, all EBCE staff in the program and most of the resource teachers used by the program were interviewed. Some of the conversations with school district administrators and staff were formal, but a good many of them occurred quite informally at EBCE functions. Thus, the interviews with EBCE staff took place not only over a period of four years in those sites which were visited more than once, but also under very different circumstances.

Students were heavily represented in the interviews conducted at each site. Huron asked to interview a broad range of students, but found that school staff tended to choose those who were the most academically or socially able. Efforts to influence the schools in this regard met with only modest success. However, we did see many students who were not local "stars." Students were interviewed both formally and informally, such conversations occurring not only in schools, but also in coffeeshops, on rides to employer sites, and occasionally on tours through the school. Although

not officially scheduled, a number of interviews were conducted with students who were not enrolled in EBCE.

Parents were also included in the field research for this study. They represented a range of socio-economic backgrounds, though our impression was that they were primarily middle- or working-class parents or parents of students who were successful in either school or the EBCE program, or both. Community employers and resource people were always visited at their work location. The interviews were usually formal and held in their offices, but occasionally were spontaneous conversations while the person was working. The employers with whom we spoke represented a range of occupations and work sites. For the most part, however, they were employers and workers in small businesses and public service agencies, including hospitals, schools, and the like. Few large business and industrial sites were included, primarily because school district staff seemed to find it difficult to arrange such interviews, but in part because there were not many involved.

Thus, during the course of the study, about 800 interviews were conducted with a broad spectrum of persons involved in various facets of local EBCE programs. Table V shows the distribution of interviewees by category and by year.

Table V

NUMBER OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED BY CATEGORY AND BY YEAR

	Year				Total
	Year I	Year II	Year III	Year IV	
State Officials	8	10	-	39	57
School District Executives	30	17	12	5	64
School Building Administrators	17	21	7	4	49
Program Directors and Staff	72	75	25	21	193
Employers/Resource Persons	37	34	6	-	77
EBCE Students	53	78	16	-	147
Parents of EBCE Students	16	13	-	-	29
Non-EBCE Teachers	13	4	4	-	21
School Counselors	14	16	4	1	35
Former EBCE Students	12	11	-	-	23
Community Members	2	-	-	-	2
Former EBCE Staff	1	1	8	3	13
Lab Staff	32	11	-	-	43
Others	3	22	9	3	37
Total	310	313	91	65	790

C. Observation

Observation of EBCE activity occurred in schools, and a great deal of time was spent by Huron staff in the learning center, the hub of EBCE activity in each building. We observed EBCE classes and EBCE seminars, and occasionally were invited to observe EBCE teachers in one-to-one conversations with students. Of course, we observed much informal interaction between EBCE staff and students in all of the sites.

In addition, observation of students at their employer sites occurred in all of the districts we visited. We observed what students were doing at

the site and spoke with them and the people with whom they were working while we were there. When students were engaged in classroom-like activities at the employer sites, Huron staff frequently sat in on these meetings for their duration. Finally, we observed student recruitment programs, advisory council sessions, parent-teacher organization meetings, and the like.

Overall, approximately 100 such observations were analyzed in field notes.

4. RECORDING AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

A. Field Notes

All interviews and conversations, both formal and informal, were recorded in field notes. Notes were taken by hand during conversations, and later dictated for transcription. They were discursive in form, and frequently wide-ranging. People were often quoted verbatim, and the notes became the field staff's personal observations on what was seen and said. Interviews ranged in length from a few minutes to several hours, depending on situation and context. An interview of one hour produced field notes which, when transcribed, had an average length of six to eight single-spaced typed pages. In addition to recording interviews, field staff dictated summary notes on site visits, and notes describing program and district context.

After field notes were transcribed, debriefing sessions were held with all other members of the field staff. Nearly half of the visits conducted during the study were two-person visits, so that debriefing became a continuing, in-the-field activity. Over the course of four years, the study produced over 3,000 pages of transcribed notes.

B. Data Analysis

The analysis of the field work data began with the staff's recording of field notes. Observations and analysis of what was said as well as its relation to other events and activities were recorded in the notes. A formal analysis of each year's research was conducted at the end of each field research year. Following the second year of field work, the field staff formally prepared a carefully detailed outline of the research issues to guide a systematic analysis of the data. Each member of the field staff then reviewed his/her own field notes, and coded all the data that were in any way relevant to these detailed issues. This systematic analysis was repeated after year III and year IV of the research.

In deciding which quotations and other field note data to include as examples and which to exclude, the Huron staff made painstaking efforts to ensure that the choice was representative. Although the field notes necessarily concerned individuals in their own context, all of the data were discussed by the Huron staff in order to reach consensus on examples that were not extreme, but represented what was possible and plausible at other sites.

APPENDIX B

THE PRODUCTS OF THE STUDY

This report is one of several which have been prepared by The Huron Institute on the implementation of Experience-Based Career Education. Other reports in the series include:

"The Implementation of Experience-Based Career Education: Program Characteristics," John DeSanctis and Peter Cowden, The Huron Institute, October, 1977.

"The Implementation of Experience-Based Career Education: Characteristics of Community Resources and Student Work Experiences," The Huron Institute, October, 1977.

"The Implementation of Experience-Based Career Education: Characteristics of Adopting Communities," The Huron Institute, October, 1977.

"Alternative Conceptions of Implementation," Eleanor Farrar, John E. DeSanctis, David K. Cohen, The Huron Institute, October, 1978.

"The Implementation of Experience-Based Career Education: A Survey of Programs and Populations," Susan A. Stix and David K. Cohen, The Huron Institute, October, 1978.

"The Impact of Experience-Based Career Education on the Organization and Process of Schooling," Eleanor Farrar, The Huron Institute, November, 1978.

"Views from Below: Implementation Research in Education," Eleanor Farrar, John E. DeSanctis, David K. Cohen, The Huron Institute, April, 1979 (condensed in Teachers College Record, Fall, 1980); "The Lawn Party: The Evolution of Federal Programs in Local Settings," Phi Delta Kappan, November, 1980.

"The Walls Within: Work, Experience, and School Reform," Eleanor Farrar, John E. DeSanctis, and Peter Cowden, The Huron Institute, July, 1980.

"State Activities in Experience-Based Career Education: Descriptive Profiles," Susan A. Stix and John E. DeSanctis, The Huron Institute, September 1980.